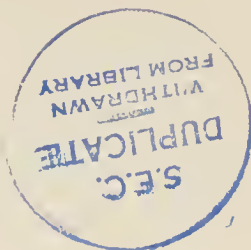


# Socialism and Agriculture

~~Lat.~~

XII. E. 23



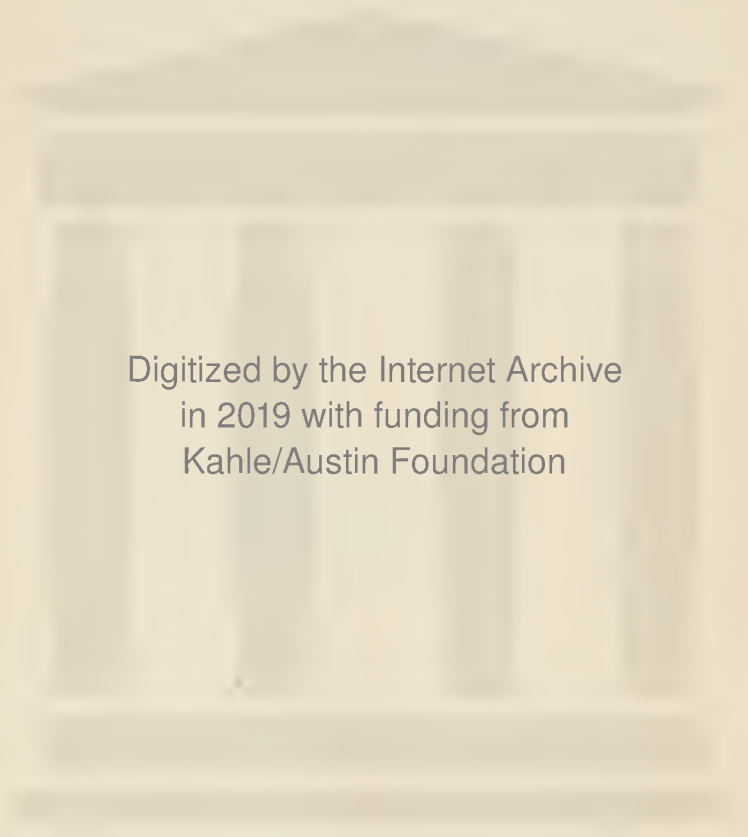
NUNC COGNOSCO EX PARTE



TRENT UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY

H<sub>2</sub>O

Thomas J. Bata Library, Trent University



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2019 with funding from  
Kahle/Austin Foundation

FABIAN SOCIALIST SERIES, No. 2

Reprinted from Fabian Tracts, Revised

## SOCIALISM AND AGRICULTURE

# THE FABIAN SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1883

THE FABIAN SOCIETY consists of men and women who are Socialists, that is to say, in the words of its "Basis," of those who aim at the reorganization of society by the emancipation of Land and Industrial Capital from individual and class ownership, and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit. . . . For the attainment of these ends the Fabian Society looks to the spread of Socialist opinions, and the social and political changes consequent thereon. It seeks to promote these by the general dissemination of knowledge as to the relation between the individual and society in its economic, ethical, and political aspects.

The Society welcomes as members any persons, men or women, who desire to promote the growth of Socialist opinion and to hasten the enactment of Socialist measures, and it exacts from its members no pledge except a declaration that they are Socialists.

The Society is largely occupied in the endeavour to discover in what way the principles of Socialism can be applied both to the political problems which from time to time come up for settlement, and to those problems of the future which are as yet rather political theory than actual politics. It holds fortnightly meetings for the discussion of papers on such subjects by members and others, some of which are published as Fabian Tracts.

The Society includes :—

- I. MEMBERS, who must sign the Basis and be elected by the Committee. Their subscription is not fixed ; each is expected to pay according to his means. They control the Society through their Executive Committee and at business meetings.
- II. ASSOCIATES, who sign a form expressing general sympathy with the objects of the Society, and pay not less than 10s. a year. They can attend all except specially private meetings, but have no control over the Society and its policy.
- III. SUBSCRIBERS, who must pay at least 5s. a year, and can attend the lectures.

The monthly paper, "FABIAN NEWS," and the Fabian Tracts are sent as published to all three classes.

Lists of Publications, Annual Report, Form of Application as Member or Associate, and any other information can be obtained on application, personally, or by letter, of

THE SECRETARY OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY,

3 CLEMENT'S INN, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

# SOCIALISM AND AGRICULTURE

By

EDWARD CARPENTER, T. S. DYMOND  
D. C. PEDDER, & THE FABIAN SOCIETY

Fabian Socialist Series, No. 2

LONDON

A. C. FIFIELD, 44 FLEET STREET, E.C.

1908

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE VILLAGE AND THE LANDLORD. By EDWARD CARPENTER . . .	5
II. THE SECRET OF RURAL DEPOPULATION. By LIEUT.-COL. D. C. PEDDER . . .	20
III. STATE-AID FOR AGRICULTURE. AN EXAMPLE. By T. S. DYMOND . . .	47
IV. THE REVIVAL OF AGRICULTURE. By THE FABIAN SOCIETY . . . . .	66

P/C.	X11 F 23	X08H ODC-fab	B7	.1.	COPY	ADD.	LST. TH 15.
------	----------	-----------------	----	-----	------	------	----------------



# SOCIALISM AND AGRICULTURE

## I. THE VILLAGE AND THE LANDLORD

By EDWARD CARPENTER

*Reprinted by permission from the "Albany Review,"*

*April, 1907*

MY object in this paper is simply to describe the economic conditions of a single country parish, here in England, and from the consideration of these conditions to draw some inferences towards our future policy with regard to the land. In modern life—in every department of it, one may say—bedrock facts are so veiled over by complex and adventitious growths that it is difficult to see the proper and original outline of any problem with which we are dealing ; and so it certainly is in this matter of the land question. Any one glancing at a country village, say in the neighbourhood of London, probably sees a mass of villas, people hurrying to a railway station, motor-cars, and so forth ; but as to where the agricultural workers are, what they are doing, how they live, what their relations may be to the land and the land owners—these things are obscure, not easily seen, and difficult to get information about. And yet these are the things, one may say, which are most vital, most important.

The parish which I have in mind to describe is a rather large and straggling parish in a rural district, with a small population, some 500 souls, almost entirely agricultural in character, consisting of farmers, farm labourers, wood-

men, and so forth, with a few miners and small artizans—on the whole a pretty hard-working, industrious lot. Fortunately, one may say, there is hardly anything resembling a villa in the whole parish; there is no resident squire, and the business man is conspicuous by his absence. The place therefore forms a good example for the study of the agricultural land question. The farms are not over large, being mostly between fifty and one hundred acres in extent. There is just the land, and the population living mainly by the cultivation of it. This population, as I have hinted, is not lacking in industry; it is fairly healthy and well grown; there is no severe poverty; and (probably owing to the absence of the parasite classes) it is better off than most of our agricultural populations. Yet it is poor, one may almost say very poor. Probably, of the hundred families in the parish, the *average* income is not much over £60 a year; and many, of course, can by no means reach even that standard.

**Financial conditions of the village.**—Let us consider some of the financial and other conditions which lead to this state of affairs. In the first place, I find that the inhabitants have to pay in actual rent to their landlords about £2,500 a year. In fact, the gross estimated rental of the parish is about £3,250, but as there are quite a few small freeholders the amount actually paid in rent is reduced to £2,500. Nearly the whole of this goes out of the parish and never comes back again. The duke and most of the other landlords are absentees. This forms at once, as is obvious, a severe tax on the inhabitants. One way or another the hundred families out of what they produce from the land have to pay £2,500 a year into alien hands—or, averaging it, £25 per family! and this, if their average income is now only £60, is certainly a heavy burden; since, if they had not to pay this sum, their income might be £85. No doubt it will be said, “Here we see the advantage of having resident squires. The money would then return to the parish.” But would it? Would it return to those who produced it? No; it would not. The spoliation of the toilers would only be disguised, not

remedied. In fact, let us suppose (a quite ordinary case) that the parish in question were owned by a single resident squire, and that the £2,500 were paid to him in rent. That rent would only go to support a small extra population of servants and dependents in the place. One or two small shops might be opened; but to the farmer and farm worker no advantage would accrue. There might be a slightly increased sale of milk and eggs; but this again would be countervailed by many disadvantages. "Sport" over all the farm lands would become a chronic nuisance; the standard and cost of living, dress, etc., would be raised; and the feeble and idiotic life of the "gentry," combined with their efforts to patronize and intimidate, would go far to corrupt the population generally. In this parish then, of which I am speaking, the people may be truly thankful that they have not any resident squires. All the same, the tax of £25 per family is levied upon them to support such squires in some place or other, and is a permanent burden upon their lives.

**Enclosure of the commons.**—Less than a hundred years ago there were in this parish extensive common lands. In fact, of the 4,600 acres of which the parish consists, 2,650, or considerably more than half, were commons. They were chiefly moors and woods; but were, needless to say, very valuable to cottagers and small farmers. Here was pasture for horses, cows, sheep, pigs, geese; here in the woods was firewood to be got, and bracken for bedding; on the moors, rabbits, bilberries, turf for fuel, etc. In 1820 these commons were enclosed; and this is another thing that has helped to cripple the lives of the inhabitants. As is well known, during all that period systematic enclosure of the common lands of Great Britain was going on. In a landlord House of Parliament it was easy enough to get bills passed. Any stick will do to beat a dog with; and it was easy to say that these lands, being common lands, were not so well cultivated as they might be, and that *therefore* the existing landlords ought to share them up. The logic might not be very convincing, but it served its purpose. The landlords appropriated the common

lands; and during the 120 years from 1760 to 1880 *ten millions of acres* in Great Britain were thus enclosed.

In 1820 the turn of this particular parish came, and its 2,650 acres of commons "went in." I used to know an old man of the locality who remembered when they "went in." He used to speak of the occurrence as one might speak of a sinister and fatal event of nature—a landslide or an earthquake. There was no idea that it could have been prevented. The commons simply went in! The country folk witnessed the proceeding with dismay; but, terrorized by their landlords, and with no voice in Parliament, they were helpless.

It may be interesting to see some of the details of the operation. In the Enclosure Award Book, still kept in the parish, there remains a full account. The Duke of Rutland, as lord of the manor, as impropiator for tithes, as proprietor, and so forth, got the lion's share, nearly 2,000 acres. The remaining 650 acres went to the other landlords. Certain manorial and tithe rights were remitted as a kind of compensation, and the thing was done. In the Award Book the duke's share is given as follows:—

	Acres.	Roods.
1. "As Impropiator for tithes of corn, grain, and hay; and in lieu of and full compensation for all manner of tithes, both great and small" .. .. .	1381	3
2. "As Lord of the Manor," and in compensation for certain manorial rights, "and for his consent to the said enclosure" ..	108	2
3. "For chief rents," amounting in the whole to £14 .. .. .	28	2
4. "For enfranchisement of copyholds" .. .. .	11	3
5. "As proprietor" .. .. .	18	2
6. "By sale to defray the expenses of the Act" .. .. .	449	1
	<hr/>	
	1998	1

Thus we find, in exchange for the ducal tithes, nearly a third of the whole area of the parish handed over—most of it certainly not the best lands, but lands having considerable value as woods and moors. We find some acres adjudged to the duke in consideration of his kind “consent” to the transaction. And, most wonderful of all, nearly 450 acres surrendered by the parish to defray the expenses of getting the Act through Parliament! And now to-day in the said parish there is not a little field or corner left—absolutely not a solitary acre out of all the vast domain which was once for the people’s use—on which the village boys can play their game of cricket! Indeed, most valuable tracts were enclosed quite in the centre of the village itself—as, for instance, a piece which is still called “The Common,” though it is no longer common, and many bits on which little cottages had been erected by quite small folk. It would be a very desirable thing that the enclosure award books in other parishes should be investigated, and the corresponding facts with regard to the ancient commons brought to light generally over the country.

**Incidence of the rates.**—A third thing which cripples the agricultural interest very considerably is the incidence of the rates. The farmer’s dread of a rise in rates has become almost proverbial. And it is by no means unnatural or unreasonable. For there is probably no class whose estimated rental is so large, compared with their actual net income, as the farmer class. A farmer whose farm, after deducting all expenses of rent, rates, manure, wages, etc., yields him a clear profit of no more than £100 a year for his household use is quite probably paying £70 a year in rent. But a superior artizan or small professional man who is making £150 a year will very likely be only paying £20 in rent. It is obvious that any slight increase in the rates will fall much more heavily on the first man than on the second. I am not here discussing the question of how far a rise of rates falls upon the landlord; for, though this may ultimately and in the far distance be so, it is clear that the farmer primarily feels the pinch, and not till he



is nearly ruined is there any chance of his getting a corresponding abatement of rent. The rates, therefore, are a serious matter to the farmer; and something in the way of shifting their incidence, and distributing the burden more fairly, ought certainly to be done.

As an instance of this latter point, let me again refer to the parish in question. We have seen that some 2,600 acres of common lands passed over to the landlords in 1820, ostensibly for the public advantage and benefit. Of these, more than 1,500 acres of moor land, held by the duke, are rated on an estimated rental of less than 2s. 6d. per acre. The general farm lands of the parish are rated on an estimated rental of 14s. or 15s. per acre on the average. Thus the moor lands are assessed at about one-sixth of the value of the farm lands. This is perhaps excessively low; but the matter might pass, if it were not for a somewhat strange fact—namely, that a few years ago, when some twenty acres of these very moor lands were wanted for a matter of great public advantage and benefit, that is, for the formation of a reservoir, the ducal estate could not part with them under £50 an acre; and a little later, when an extension of acreage was required, the district council had to pay a much higher price, so that the total purchase, first and last, comes out at more than £150 per acre! Now here is something very seriously out of joint. Either the moor lands are worth a capital value of £150 an acre, in which case they ought to be assessed at, say £5, instead of at 2s. 6d.; or else, if the rating at 2s. 6d. is really just and fair, surely it is monstrous that the public, having to carry through a most important and necessary improvement, should be “held up” and made to pay a ruinous price, simply because the land cannot be obtained elsewhere. The conclusion is: Let such lands be rated in accordance with the capital value set upon them by their owners, and we shall have a much fairer and more equitable distribution of the public burden.

**The nuisance of “sport.”**—And this matter of the moors leads to the consideration of a fourth cause which cripples the land cultivator terribly in this country. I

mean Sport. The nuisance and detriment that this is to the farmer has become so great that, unless strict measures are soon taken, widespread ruin will ensue. In many subtle ways this acts. With the enormous growth of wealthy and luxurious classes during the last fifty years the tendency has been to turn the country districts into a mere playground. The very meaning of the word sport has changed. The careful working of covers by the occasional sportsman has been replaced by clumsy battues, with wild shouts and shrieks of "drivers," and huge slaughter of birds, half tame, and specially bred for the purpose. Mobs of people, anxious to appear fashionable, and rigged out by their tailors in befitting costume, are formed into shooting parties. Rich men, wanting to get into society, hire moors and woods, regardless of expense, regardless of animal slaughter, regardless of agricultural interests, as long as they get an opportunity to invite their friends.

The financing of these affairs is funny. A large moor will let for the grouse season for £3,000, say on the condition of grouse being bagged up to, but not beyond, 2,400 brace. Mid-week parties hurry in by rail and motor, stay for two or perhaps three nights, and hurry off again, to be succeeded by other parties the following weeks. The whole thing is conducted in the most mechanical way, with "drives," "batteries," and so forth. And when the expenses are added up, including men employed, guests entertained, and rent paid, they certainly do not fall far short of the proverbial guinea a bird!

In Devonshire to-day the farms in many parts are simply eaten up by rabbits, because the landlords, in order to provide plenty of shooting, insist on spinneys and copses and hedgerows and waste bits being retained in their wild state for purposes of cover! On the northern moors the rabbits similarly devastate the farms along the moor edges—not because the rabbits are preserved, for the shooting is mainly of grouse and pheasants, but because the moors, being uncared-for except in this way, the rabbits are allowed to multiply without check. They are the game-keeper's perquisite. Yet if the farmer who has a farm adjoining the moor carries a gun to protect himself against

their invasions, it is conveyed to him (if a tenant of the same landlord) that he had better not do so, lest he should be suspected of shooting the grouse ! Thus he is paralysed from his own defence. In the parish of which I am speaking there are lands along the moor edges which used to grow oats and other crops, but which now, on account of the rabbit nuisance, are quite uncultivable in that way, and only yield the barest pasture.

**Fifty years of agricultural decay.**—In and about 1850, when wheat more than once reached £5 a quarter, the farmers and landlords were doing a roaring trade. Rents were high, but the land could afford it. Farmers were anxious to increase the size of their holdings, and landlords were not averse to this, as it saved them trouble. And so set in that tendency to roll small holdings into big ones, which continued, with baneful effect, during all the second half of the century. Sport at the same time came in to increase the action. It was easier to pacify the few than the many over that matter. It was simpler to hunt a pack of hounds over two or three large farms than across a network of small holdings. Besides, the New Rich, as well as the elder gentry, wanted widespread parks, and not a democratic rabble of cottagers at their very doors. And so the game went on. Soon prices of farmstuff fell heavily. But it is easier to get rents up than to get them down again. The alleviations of rent which *have* taken place since 1854 have been only painfully gained and grudgingly yielded. Wheat which was at 100 shillings a quarter then has been the last few years at about 30 shillings ! And though other farmstuffs have not fallen in like degree, yet during all that period of declining prices the British farmer has been pinched and pined all over the country. The landlord has been on top of him ; and with holdings often much too large for his need, and a yearly balance too small, he has employed far less labour and tillage than he ought to have done ; his land has lost heart ; and he has lost heart—till he has become to-day probably the least enterprising and least up-to-date of all the agriculturists of Western Europe.



Such are some, at least, of the causes which have contributed to the decay of agriculture in this country ; and their consideration may indicate the directions in which to seek for a cure.

**Security of tenure needed.**—What is needed, first and foremost, is very obviously security of tenure, under such conditions as shall give both farmer and cottager a powerful interest in the land and its improvement. It is often said, and supposed, that the countryman nowadays does not care about the land and the rural life, and is longing to exchange it for town life. I do not find this so. I find that he is compelled into town life by the hard conditions which prevail in the country—but not that he *wants* to leave the latter. Indeed, I am amazed at the tenacity with which he clings to the land, despite the long hours and the heavy toil ; nor can one witness without wonder and admiration the really genuine interest which he feels in its proper treatment, quite apart from any advantage or disadvantage to himself. It is common to find a farm labourer expressing satisfaction or disgust at the good or bad tillage of a field with which he is in no way connected ; or to see a small farmer's son working early and late, perhaps up to the age of thirty, with no wages but a mere pittance in the way of pocket-money, and only a remote prospect of inheriting at some future date his share of the farm-stock and savings, and yet taking a whole-hearted interest in the work not really different from that which an artist may feel. There is some splendid material here—in these classes neglected by the nation, and overlaid by a tawdry and cheap-jack civilization.

I say it is clear that they must be given a secure and liberal tenure of the land and be free once for all from the caprice of the private landlord, with his insolences of political intimidation and sport, and his overbearance in parochial affairs. The absolute speechlessness of our rural workers to-day on all matters of public interest is clearly, to any one who knows them, due to their mortal dread lest their words should reach the powers above. It has become an ingrained habit. And it has led, of course, to

a real paralysis of their thinking capacity and their enterprise. But place these men in a position where the fruits of their toil will be secure, where improvements can be made, in cottage or farm, with a sense of ownership, and where their vote and voice in the councils of the parish will not be dependent on squire or parson ; and the world will be astonished at the result.

**Public ownership.**—There are two main directions in which to go in the matter of secure tenure. One is the creation of more small freeholds ; the other is the throwing of lands into the hands of public authorities, and the creation of permanent tenures under them. Though the latter embodies the best general principle, I do not think that forms a reason for ruling out freeholds *altogether*. In all these matters variety is better than uniformity ; and a certain number of freeholds would probably be desirable. In the same way, with regard to public ownership, if anything like nationalization of the land is effected, I think it should decidedly be on the same principle of variety—creating not only State and municipal ownership, but ownership by county councils, district councils, parish councils, etc.—with a leaning perhaps towards the more *local* authorities, because the needs of particular lands and the folk occupying them are likely on the whole to be better understood and allowed for in the locality than from a distance.

Let us suppose, in the parish which I have taken for my text, that by some kind of political miracle, all the lands on which rents are now being paid to absent landlords were transferred to the ownership of the Parish Council. Then at once the latter body would come into an income of £2,500 a year. At one blow the whole burden of the rates would fall off, and still a large balance be left for public works and improvements of all kinds. It might be allowable, for a moment, to draw a picture of the Utopian conditions which would ensue—the rates all paid, the rents milder and more equal than before, the wages of parish workers raised, free meals for school-children provided, capital available for public buildings, free libraries,

agricultural engines and machinery, also for improving or administering common lands and woods, and so forth.

There is no danger, of course, of so delirious an embarrassment actually occurring ! for any scheme of nationalization would take a long time, and would only gradually culminate ; and no scheme would place the whole lands of a parish at the disposal of a single body like the parish council. But the example helps us to realize the situation. Every farmer and cottager whose holding was under a public body would know and feel that whatever rent he might have to pay, it would come back to him in public advantages, in the ordaining of which he would have a voice ; he would know that he would be in no danger of disturbance as long as he paid his rent ; and in the matter of capital improvements in land or building he might either make them himself (with the council's consent), in which case, if he should decide later on to quit the holding, the council would compensate him, knowing that the rental paid by the new tenant would be correspondingly increased ; or he could get the council (if willing) to make the improvement, and himself pay a correspondingly increased rent for it. In either case he would have as good a bargain, and almost as free a hand, as if he were on his own freehold.

**Small holdings.**—Security of tenure, largely through public ownership, must certainly be one of the first items of a land-reform programme. Another item, the importance of which is now being widely felt, is the making provision for the effective supply of small holdings. Whether the present Small Holdings and Allotments Act (of 1907) *will* prove effective or not remains to be seen. But something effective in that direction must clearly be done.

The Act of 1907 defines a "small holding" as exceeding one acre and not exceeding fifty acres. By small holdings I would rather be understood to mean holdings, freehold or leasehold, from twenty-five acres down to one or two acres in extent, each with cottage and buildings

attached. Of this class of holding (largely owing to the "rolling up" policy of last century) there is an absolute famine in the land. The demand, the outcry, for them is great, but the supply is most scanty. Yet this class covers some of the most important work of modern agriculture, and a great variety of such work. It includes, in its smaller sizes, market gardens, with intensive culture of all kinds, and glass, besides the kind of holding occupied by the professional man or other worker who supplements his income by some small cultivation; and in its larger sizes it includes nurseries, as well as small arable and pasture farms. The starvation that exists to-day in Britain of all these classes of industry is a serious matter.

It will be said that if there is such a demand for small holdings, the supply will soon by natural laws be forthcoming. But as a matter of fact under our present system this is not so—and for three reasons: (1) The slowness of the landed classes to perceive the needs of the day—even though to their own interest; (2) The want of capital among a great number of them which makes them unwilling to face the breaking up of large farms and the building of extra cottages; (3) The fact that those who have money are careless about public needs, and do not *want* to see a sturdy population of small holders about their doors.

In the parish with which we are dealing, owing partly to its distance from a market, the demand for such holdings takes chiefly the form of a demand for small arable and pasture farms. But the need of these is great, as indeed it is nearly all over the country. A holding of this kind, of any size from five to twenty acres, forms an excellent stepping-stone for a farm labourer or farmer's son towards a position of independence. A second or third son of a farmer, not likely to follow his father in the occupation of the farm, has to-day only a poor prospect. Unable to command enough capital to stock a large farm himself, and unable to find a small one, he has but two alternatives—to drift down into the fruitless life of the farm labourer, or else to go off and try his luck in town. If, as is most



often the case, he is twenty-five or so before the need of making a decision comes upon him, his chances of learning a town trade are closed, and the first alternative is all that is left. Yet the small holder of this kind is often one of the most effective and useful types of agricultural worker. On a holding, say, of fifteen acres, while he cannot get an adequate living for himself and family by ordinary farm methods, yet he can gain a considerable amount, which he supplements by working as a useful hand for neighbours at harvest and other times. Being thrown on his resources, and not having too much land, he gains more than the average out of it, and his own ingenuities and capacities are developed; so that, as a rule, he is the most resourceful and capable type of man in the district. It is of the most vital importance to the country that this type of man, and his class of holding, should be encouraged.

**Agricultural co-operation.**—There is one method which I have so far neglected to mention by which both security of tenure and small holdings can be obtained—I mean Co-operation. The formation of co-operative societies for the purchase of large farms, for the division of them, the building of cottages, and the leasing of small holdings so obtained, is one of the most hopeful directions for the future. It ought to be easy for the public authorities to lend money on perfectly safe terms for this purpose. What co-operation has done and is doing for agriculture in other countries—in the way of establishing banks, land-holding societies, societies for butter-making, egg-collecting, buying of feeding stuffs and manures, sale of produce, etc.—is now perfectly well known. Ireland even has left England behind in this matter; but England and Scotland will have to level up. It is a sign, at least of good intentions, that the new Act gives power to the County Councils to promote and assist the formation and working of co-operative agricultural societies of all kinds.

**Re-transfer of old common lands and declaration of land values.**—One of the very first things, I think, which

ought to be taken up is this question of the commons. If ten million acres between 1760 and 1880 passed so easily from the public use into the exclusive hands of the land owners, surely there ought not to be much difficulty in passing them back again. As I have said, they were appropriated mainly on the plea that, being commons, they were inadequately cultivated. The main cultivation they have received from the landlords has been of rabbits, grouse, and other game! The public has been simply played with in the matter; and agricultural interests, instead of being extended and improved, have been severely damaged. When we realize, in addition to this, that, owing to the increase of the general population and its needs, these tracts which passed into private hands with such slender compensation to the public are now held up at ruinous prices, we realize that it is high time that the game should cease; and that the lands which Parliament voted away from the public in those days should now be voted back again—and with “compensation” on a similar scale. These lands are still largely in the hands of the families to whom they were awarded; and the transfer could perhaps be most fairly and reasonably effected by their simple reversion to the public on the expiration of existing life interests in them. But, of course, there would have to be land courts to deal with and compensate special cases, as where the land had changed hands, and so forth.

The value of such ancient common lands to the public would now be very great. Large portions of them would be suitable for cultivation and for allocation in small holdings; the villages would again have a chance of public playgrounds and cricket grounds; the parish councils would have lands (so much needed and so difficult to obtain) for allotment gardens; the district councils might turn many an old woodland into a public park; while the wilder moors and mountains could be held under county councils or the State, either for afforestation or as reserves for the enjoyment of the public, and the preservation of certain classes of wild animals and birds, now in danger of extinction.

Let a large measure of this kind be passed retransferring the main portion of the common lands into public hands ; and at the same time a measure compelling owners in the future to declare their land values, and giving power to the public bodies to purchase on the basis of the values so declared ; and already we should have made two important steps towards bringing the land of the nation into the possession of its rightful owners.

## II. THE SECRET OF RURAL DEPOPULATION

BY LIEUT.-COL. D. C. PEDDER

THE question "Why do I stay where I am?" is one that interests all of us. Its answers range between that of Sterne's starling with the simple "I can't get out" and that of the happy few who can say, "It is well for us to be here." But most people who are what in the country we call "fixters" have to confess that they are the prisoners of habit. The more regular our life, the harder it is to break away from its rule.

Now, of all occupations that of the tiller of the soil is perhaps the most regular. He is hitched on to the zodiac. Every action of his working life is as recurrent as the seasons themselves. Ploughing is a step towards ploughing, sowing is a step towards sowing again. And so it goes round. The son of a field labourer, in the ordinary course of things, goes to field work as soon as the school will let him. By the time he is getting "man's money" he has little volition left. Habit has taken its place. The odds would seem to be long in favour of his remaining a field labourer for the term of his natural life.

But there is something more than habit to fasten him to the land. By the time he is sixteen he is specialized for field work. That is the only skilled labour for which he will ever be fit. Off the land he is only so much horsepower. He can dig—under direction—in a drain, or he can carry bales at the docks. He is past learning another craft. He is moored head and stern to the land by two hawsers, habit and hopelessness.

And yet his breaking away from the land is becoming



so common as to constitute a national danger. Why is this? We must go back, I think, to a period before rustic unrest began distinctly to take the form of escape.

**The fauna of the country.**—Up to some thirty odd years ago agricultural labourers were regarded as a quite permanent factor in the sum of English life. They were part of the *fauna* of the country—like pheasants and partridges; only there is no getting a good head of game without preserving, and there was no need to preserve country labourers. Sergeant Kite was almost the only poacher to be feared, and the toll he took was trifling. Now and then typhus or an emigration agent would descend upon a village, and a cottage would be empty for a month or so. But that was only a momentary inconvenience to an individual employer. The real difficulty was not how to breed labourers, like pheasants, but how to keep down their numbers, like rabbits. No more cottages were allowed upon an estate than would just supply roofoage to the labourers it employed. Increase was not allowed for. Infant mortality was high. Overcrowding and sanitary neglect did their work. Semi-starvation helped. Still, however, the supply of labour exceeded the demand. Those were the days in which a great farmer is said to have offered a friend a guinea if he could find a weed in his wheat-field. With men's wages at 6s. or 7s. a week, women glad to take what they could get for field work, and corn at 50s. a quarter, the land could be well "done," as they say. The employer could be well "done," too. A great agriculturist's recollections of about this period were published a few years ago. They were a record of good living, *menus* of dinners, reminiscences of hunting breakfasts, conversations with admiring noblemen. "Hey, the green holly. This life is most jolly," ought to have been the motto of the book. The world went very well then—with squires and farmers.

I do not think the idea of what we call a "rural exodus" occurred seriously to any one before the early seventies. There was the land, and that there should be men to till it seemed a law of nature.

That the men might possibly one day turn their backs on the land in sufficiently large numbers to seriously inconvenience squires and farmers generally—this idea never entered the head of the average employer. Where were they to go? The land of Egypt, the house of bondage, was pretty secure in the deserts and seas that surrounded it. The prison was hard to break.

Looking at the wages and the housing of the labourer in those days, it really seems as though physical laws were all that prevented the process of degradation and deprivation of which he was the victim from being continued indefinitely. Men cannot work unless they eat—something. The proverbial straw a day had very nearly been reached. Out of English countrymen, the descendants of the men who rose in arms with Wat Tyler and Jack Cade, had been evolved by the sheer greed and selfishness of squires and farmers, a race so reduced by long-continued starvation and oppression that they seemed, generally, as incapable of resistance as their tyrants were, generally, incapable of ruth. "Hunger will tame a lion," says Robinson Crusoe.

The British farmer put the maxim to proof.

Froissart called the English common people of his day the haughtiest and most overweening that the world could show. That was in the fourteenth century. This is what Joseph Arch said at the end of the nineteenth: "I had seen my brother labourers stand and tremble like an aspen leaf at the dark look of the employer simply because they had not the pluck of men." You may see the same thing to-day. Nothing is sadder than the abjectness of the labourer before the scowl of his master.

The labourer who was to be hanged the other day, and who said "Thank ye, sir," to Jack Ketch on his adjusting the rope, is a fair instance of the attitude of his class to any Jack-in-office or authority. They are descended from generations of half-starved parents, and they show "the mettle of their pasture."

The farmer seemed to have done his work thoroughly. He had produced what he wanted, a submissive drudge who cost little, did his work, and gave no trouble

whatever. The labourer's hand had not yet lost its cunning.

**In the days of the Corn Laws.**—The work was done and done well. The farmers ate, drank, and enjoyed themselves. That the labouring population had any "rights" as against the "masters" was a notion dismissed with contempt as part of the professional agitator's stock-in-trade. "The country" meant the landlord and the farmer. When we think of Athens in the days of Pericles, we hardly give a thought to the slave population. They are below the notice of history. And so it practically was with our rural labourers until the days of the Agricultural Labourers' Union. The Church knew them as "the poor." To the employers they were "the men." Charles Kingsley, in "Alton Locke," gives a vivid description of an agricultural riot, its aimless despair, its impotent violence. I have here a reprinted report of a more peaceful demonstration in 1846. It is sad reading. But there is nothing in it to frighten anybody. The word "rising" cannot be applied to these pitiful wriggings of the great invertebrate earth-worm upon which the classes then recognized as England were so light-heartedly treading. Its head was never reared to strike. Its demonstrations demonstrated nothing but its own feebleness. The repeal of the Corn Laws left the labourer morally much where he was. Bread was cheaper, but the hand of the employer was perhaps heavier than before. From 1855 to the days of Joseph Arch was perhaps as black a time as any the labourers had to pass. The price of wheat was high, the squires raised their rents, the farmers recouped themselves by cutting down wages. The prosperity of squires and farmers was thus squeezed out of the already abject poverty of the poor. Any appearance of discontent was sternly repressed. To quote the words of a great agricultural authority, "It was a state of things disgraceful to all concerned." *Except* to labourers, I think. But it created no commotion. The Church, represented in every country parish, raised no protest. The parson had long ceased to be the "persona" of his flock. He thought more of the hurdles than of the

sheep, as they say. The souls of squires and farmers *rotted* in the cradle of an easy conscience. They were good Churchmen to a man. Then, all at once, a bolt from the blue, came.

**The Agricultural Labourers' Union.**—I need not dwell upon the history of that great movement. Opposed though it was by the landed interest in every form, denounced by too many of the country clergy and unhelpt by the rest, it went on triumphantly until it had raised agricultural wages almost throughout the whole of England to a point at which the existence of the labourer was no longer *intolerable*. That much obtained, it collapsed. It is a remarkable instance of a great rising against long-endured oppression which contented itself with a bare rectification of the immediate wrong complained of. There was no violence, no resentment. This was undoubtedly due in great measure to the personal character and influence of the leader of the movement, Joseph Arch, a man of whom it is impossible to think without gratitude and respect. But it is no less true that the moderation shown by the men, both in their struggle and their success, argues a certain want of resilience which testifies to the extent to which the fire and vigour of the race had been sapped by long-continued semi-starvation and enforced submission to petty tyranny. The Agricultural Union did not, I think, appreciably raise the labourer; it only raised his wages. Instead of calling up a spirit of independence like that which animated the leader (a man, we must remember, born and bred in a cottage the property of his father, not of his employer), it left them generally, although materially better off, individually as submissive and as incapable of assertion of their personal rights as they had been through long generations of practical serfdom.

But the apathy of their hopelessness had been disturbed. The employers' difficulty had been the emigration agents' opportunity, and the plethora of labour had been relieved by the departure of a large percentage of the agricultural population. When the smoke of the struggle cleared off it was quite obvious that horizons had widened. Young



men who dared not defy the arrogance of their employers found courage enough to escape from it to the railways or the towns. In this way the best young blood kept gradually draining away. The process has been steadily going on since.

The best men go. Labouring parents plot escape for their boys from the land as if they were prisoners in an enemy's country. Nobody stays of choice. You may hear former farm labourers speak of their late employers as a seventeenth century mariner might have spoken of the Moors of Tangier, among whom he had been a captive.

**Is the labourer in fault?**—It has been said by a vigorous clerical writer that the labourer's discontent is merely a survival from the "bad, old, black past," when he really had something to complain of. All that has long gone by. It is the labourer's "evil temper" that still "provokes masters to harsh measures, harsh words, driving, and all such seemingly needless regulations as the command to keep no fowls or pigs, the tied cottages, and the domineering tone." All this is the labourer's fault, says the writer. Things are not now as they were in the times when "labourers were scornfully trampled on—and when the Church, cowed and faithless, was as little inclined as the State to help their condition." All that is gone by. Farmers and parsons have undergone a wonderful change. Like the Homeric hero, they "boast that they are a great deal better than their fathers." But the labourer is bad indeed. The characteristics of the labourer are "shirking, dishonesty, and negligence." "Tom, Dick, and Sam abuse their employer, sit under the hedge when he is out of sight, steal his corn and meal, leave his horses harnessed and go off drinking, teach him that they have no love or gratitude, but only fear." The colouring suggests the moral complexion of a chain-gang. He might have adopted the words which Mr. Sam Weller in "Pickwick" puts into the mouth of a "wirtuous clergyman." "He's a malicious, bad-disposed, worldly-minded, spiteful, windictive creetur, with a hard heart as there ain't no soft'nin."

Our "wirtuous clergyman" in this case pronounces the

rural villages to be in a state of utter decay, and exhorts us to build our hopes for the future entirely upon the progress of our urban population. Villages and villagers are played out.

Well, I dissent entirely. I am no believer in sudden and unintelligible changes. Farmers are much what they were sixty years ago. Clergymen are not so very different. The cut of their coats is altered, that is about all. Their intentions are as good as ever, and the influence they exert exactly as bad, as far as the independence and manliness of their poor parishioners is concerned. And the labourer is what these have made him. He is still, as he has so long been, like an eel on an eel spear. He can wriggle, but that is about all. Until he is set free we can't expect anything very great of him in the way of moral improvement. But his good qualities are only dormant, held in abeyance till the winter of his discontent is made glorious by the sun of—Land Reform. At any rate, whatever he is, it is the social and economical system of England that has made him so. He has been crushed under an intolerable pressure, and until that is removed we must expect his faults to be of the grovelling sort. Give him opportunity and he will be erect, and his faults will probably be what they were in Froissart's time.

**How the labourer lives.**—Let us give one comprehensive glance to the conditions under which the labourer mostly lives, and under which some people expect him to cultivate all the Christian graces. A miserable cottage which as a tenant-at-will he can only repair or improve at the risk of his outlay in labour or in money being appropriated by his employer, a life of constant hardship, wages even now barely sufficient for food, fire, and clothing, the proud man's contumely, the want of hope, the long vista of thankless drudgery through which the eye looks only to rest finally upon the workhouse, the absence of anything like social enjoyment, the tyranny of drink, the capricious restrictions upon personal liberty of action which his employer may at pleasure impose, and to which he must submit or go. It is a gloomy picture.

The strange thing is that up to so comparatively recent a time Englishmen should have accepted a life like this, a life still worse than this, as their natural doom, exactly as an Esquimaux may submit unrepiningly to the rigours of an Arctic climate. An Esquimaux wants more seals; ice and snow and darkness are matters of course. So Joseph Arch's men wanted more wages, they had no dislike to their occupation or the hardships inseparable from it. The best of them had doubtless the same pride and pleasure in their work which every skilled craftsman finds in the exercise of his skill. A great change has passed over the labourer in this respect. Tillage in all its branches appears to most of them sheer drudgery, absolutely uninteresting if not positively hateful. No mere rise of wages will alter this.

**Skilled labour and farm wages.**—I do not think I can put this more forcibly before you than by condensing here a conversation I had a month or two ago with a man of the highest farming class, engaged in the management of one of those immense farms which seem to me to be the ruin of England.

It was a very favourable specimen. The management was evidently liberal, the owner, I believe, personally kindly. But the system was too strong. On this great farm the piecework principle was in force. "So if a man wastes his time, he wastes what is his own," said my informant. The scale of pay was high for the district. "With these wages the men save, I suppose?" I said. "No, never. It goes as it comes. The men who get most don't live more comfortably than the others." "Do they take much interest in the work?" "Not the very slightest. If it were not for the piecework plan we might as well give up." "Are the men who are now in their prime as skilled in their work as the old men used to be?" "There is no comparison." He referred to an old labourer who possessed nine arts. I will count them up. Hedging and ditching (in two varieties), dry fence making, rick building, thatching, hurdle making, sheep-cage making, mowing, brewing. "You have no labourer who can do the same

now?" "No, not one of them." "You mean no one man can do all?" "I mean that there is not a man on the farm who can do *one* of these things as it ought to be done."

Now, what is the reason of this? The general answer is "education." Education has something to do with it, doubtless. But let me read what Professor Thorold Rogers wrote in 1878 on the subject of rustic arts. He enumerates five or six, including ploughing, which I have omitted as too universal for special mention.

And he sums up thus: "Well, if you compare the work of the agricultural labourer who possesses the five or six qualifications I have mentioned with the work of an ordinary artizan who receives 35s. a week, the agricultural labourer, as regards the varied nature of his accomplishments, is inconceivably the superior of the artizan." I think we must add to this that the field hand is more exposed to wind and weather than the artizan. His life is a harder one. I have known men who lately have never had a dry stitch on them from Monday morning to Saturday night.

Now, let us suppose a farm hand to have mastered half a dozen of these arts. On the land he is *lucky* if he gets 15s. or 16s. a week, all counted. If he gets "on the line," the railway, just with pick and spade, he gets 18s. or 20s. What encouragement is there for a labourer to learn his craft? Again. The other day, in the village where I live, there was a little semi-political meeting, held by some working-men from a neighbouring town. It was a lively little business enough. But few labourers came. There was a largish group of farm hands at the door just before the speaking began. Some one, I was told, asked them if they were not coming in. "Well," says one, "we've been thinking it over. But if we come in we shall hear of it to-morrow from the master." So they went off. The yoke is never for a moment off the agricultural labourer's neck. I daresay the ganger looks after the platelayers on the line at their work sternly enough. But when a man shoulders his pick and goes home he is his own man. And that is what a farm hand never can say. Perhaps education may have helped him to feel it.



Why do men dislike farm labour ? How is it possible that they should like it ? Here is an occupation in which skill brings no reward, which marks a man quite early in life with an ineffaceable brand of social inferiority, which compels submission in a way almost unknown to any other, which offers no hope and does not even promise permanence enough for habit to go to work assuredly in the task of accommodating existence to its conditions.

All this explains discontent. But it does not explain why up to some thirty years ago the sort of discontent with which we now have to deal should apparently not have existed.

Education may have something to do with it. Even what a lad learns at the village school does to a certain extent develop his imaginative faculties ; and imagination is like a kite. The stronger it flies the more it pulls its flyer after it. But personal contact with men from the outer world has done more. Modern ideas are introduced, not by the schoolmaster, but by the tramp, and the traveller, and the tallyman. The labourer sees himself through their eyes. And, what is more, *he sees his master*. The conditions under which he labours are degrading. This is strangely brought home to him by comparison of his position with that of others. And he confounds the labour with the conditions. A country labourer's great ambition is to disguise his occupation. As far as he can he dresses like a townsman, and wishes to be taken for one.

I lately read a book called " Mendip Annals," an account by Mrs. Hannah More's sister of the good work done in Somerset by those two plucky old ladies just a hundred years ago. Comparing the ordinary farmer as he is there depicted with Charles Kingsley's references to him in the forties, with what the condition of his labourers showed him to be in the fifties, with Joseph Arch's account of him in the seventies, and with what I have myself gathered from labourers and personal observation of his general character since, I should say that he had undergone less change in the course of the century than perhaps any other class of Englishman. A writer in " Longman's," commenting upon Mr. Rider Haggard's " Farmer's Year," says that

the schools to which farmers' sons go very often do not teach them as much as the village school teaches the labourer's boys. It is hard to believe, I grant, but the tradition of class superiority is kept up in all its vigour in the farmhouse. The little Spartan, well taught or not, is reared up in the contempt of the little Helot. The consequence is that class characteristics survive in a curious way. The ordinary non-working farmer (there are, of course, exceptions) belongs to the period of Parson Trulliber and Squire Western. He has stood still. The labourer has reached a point from which he can, inarticulately, criticize his master. And he does. Inquire why a man leaves his place. The answer varies in form, but is generally the same in substance. "He couldn't stand the way Mr. So-and-so goes on."

Now how does Mr. So-and-so go on? If we can get a clear idea of him we shall be on the way to an explanation of labouring discontent.

**The modern farmer.**—A century or so ago England was still the land of "characters." Uncle Toby and Lieutenant Lismahago, Commodore Trunnion and Parson Adams, were popular in fiction because they were familiar in fact. The closer association of modern times has rounded off our angles into a somewhat distressing uniformity. We are too much afraid of one another not to straighten out the crooks in our natures before a bend becomes a distortion. We show little mercy to eccentricity unless it has a powerful backer, wealth or rank or talent. People who live in a crowd learn to keep their elbows to themselves. In farming society there is elbow room and to spare. We all know the merchant skipper according to Clark Russell and Frank Bullen, and we understand that the conditions of seafaring life naturally evolve him, that any man in that position will have to fight a battle with himself not to become a brute. It is the same thing with the farmer. He is not so completely isolated as the skipper, the law is more present to him, his men are not so completely at the mercy of his temper. Self-indulgence in food and drink is qualified by the presence of his family; though very nearly, he

is not entirely beyond the reach of public opinion. But the conditions of his life are such as to make him a petty tyrant unless he is superior enough to shape and fashion it for himself. Public opinion, that keeps most of us on our legs, will give him no help in this. And a petty tyrant he generally is. As long as he keeps within the law he need not fear the cold shoulder among his fellows. "A man mustn't be unneighbourly," they say. Now if there is one thing established by rural practice it is that farmers are farmers' neighbours. Labourers do not stand to them in that relation. Class charity covers a multitude of sins.

The non-working farmer is like Nora Creina in the song. His beauties are free "to sink or swell as Nature pleases." They mostly swell. He is under little extraneous restraint, and intellectual self-repression belongs to an intellectual level that he has not reached. We are all subject to attacks of temper. These are suppressed by a feeling of intellectual shame. It is this which mostly prevents passing irritation from hardening into petty spite. Now for a farmer to lose his temper seems to him and his class the most natural thing in the world. "Spite" is constantly looked for as a motive in rural matters, and pretty generally found.

**Rural spite.**—I must give instances. You will ask, "How do you know them to be true?" Some, of course, are taken from reports of magisterial proceedings, or the like. For others, I can only say I believe them, and I know them to be believed among the people whom they concern. What is believed to be fact does, morally, the work of fact. That is enough for my immediate purpose.

Here is one. Two elderly labourers had given offence to some farming magnates before whom, sitting in an official capacity, their wives had to appear in order to obtain their share of a village charity to which their claim had formerly been allowed without question. They, poor old women, were sneered rudely away and their just claim summarily refused. The whole of the circumstances were made public in three county papers. (I am glad to say that in this case the County Council was successfully in-

voked.) You would think that some apology was offered ; you do not know the great farmer. Here is another case. A poor man had to carry round a circular, in which he was in no way concerned, emanating from the vicar of the parish. He took it to a great farmer in the same way as to the rest of the village. It did not please him, and he spoke very angrily to the bearer. Such an ebullition of temper is sometimes too sudden to be restrained. Yes, but for weeks afterwards (for ever afterwards, for aught I know to the contrary), when the poor man touched his hat, the great man passed on without noticing his salute. There is somewhere a fine translation of an old Spanish ballad of a Moorish king receiving the news of the taking of one of his towns by the enemy.

*“ Letters to the Monarch tell  
How Alahma's city fell.  
In the fire the scroll he threw  
And the messenger he slew.”*

The feeling is the same in both cases. Neither the fifteenth-century tyrant nor the nineteenth-century farmer could see any reason for repressing a natural feeling. Such men are not pleasant masters.

As far as my observation goes, I think primitive impulse is less restrained among non-working farmers than among any other equally well-fed and well-dressed class in England. For instance, cursing has died out among us generally. As villagers say, “ We damn and done wi' it.” It survives in corners where ridicule does not come. Here is rather an elaborate specimen of farming malediction. The speaker a well-gloved, well-hatted, well-groomed man, a non-working farmer. He had been disappointed (not in any way defrauded) of the services of the labourer to whom he was speaking.

“ I wish you may die in a ditch without a rag to cover you or a crust of bread to put in your mouth. And I hope I may live to see it.”

This want of the conscious self-restraint which is imposed by the pressure of public opinion produces what I



have called "characters." In one farm there may be a half-frantic sot; in another a man with a bad temper, which he will discharge by following a labourer "up a furrow and down a furrow," and swearing at him all the way. One wealthy agriculturist is famous for his cottages, which are known as "Tommy's Pigsties." He cannot bear to put his hand in his pocket for necessary repairs. It was in one of his cottages that the carpenter, going to measure a corpse for a coffin, started back in surprise. The white face was all streaked and blotched with green. It was only the drip of the rain through the rotten thatch—the moss, rather, for there was more moss than straw. "We've put un in the driest corner there was," said the family apologetically. People who live in the sight of society (I mean of those whom they consider their associates) may be proud, but their pride rarely takes an aggressive form. Villages are seldom visited by the search-ray of publicity. In them pride of class has its perfect working. A celebrated agriculturist in the Bible might be the patron saint of many of his modern fellows—Nabal. "Such a man of Belial that a man cannot speak to him." I have just been reading Sir Edmund Verney's book, "American Methods." Nothing is more striking than the easiness of access of the employer and the way he invites suggestions. I told a story once of a labourer, a friend of my own, who sat up nearly a whole night to get a plough of his master's fit for work—without so much as a thank you. The employer was a typical and leading man of his class. It would have been considered derogatory to notice a bit of work like that with a "thank you." Do what he will, the labourer is an unprofitable servant.

To sum up this part of my subject. The isolation and the habits of life of the non-working farmer tend strongly to exaggerate in him those selfish instincts which make a man intolerable to his dependents. This is the more galling because his authority has been stretched so as to cover matters that lie quite outside the ordinary sphere of the relations of employer and employed.

I give this a leading place in the causes of rural depopulation.

**Cottages as booby-traps.**—Another cause is to be found in the labourer's helplessness before what he rightly or wrongly considers injustice. I take the matter of housing as illustrative of this. Bad housing is admittedly one reason of rustic discontent. I speak here of the cottage merely as a booby-trap.

I used as a boy to read of the booby-birds on the islands of the South Seas. They sat in rows, and sailors knocked them on the head one after the other, without its occurring to them to fly away. Labourers are much of the same sort. So should we be, I suppose, if our faculties and our energies had been deliberately crushed down for generations. They are trapped one after the other with the most touching simplicity. But they do not like it. Irritations of this sort go on accumulating unnoticed until the cup runs over. It is running over now.

Most cottages are "tied" to farms. Say a farmer has a very bad one; how is he to get a labourer in and make him stay? What is he to do? First, there is the advertisement, "good cottage and garden." Much hiring is done by letter. The labourer sees the advertisement. To go and see the cottage means losing a day's wage. I wish the wives went. But they don't. And they don't encourage their husbands to go. There is the money lost to begin with, and very likely a bad head resulting from much strange beer; and, after all, "what could *he* tell if he saw it?" Such is the contempt felt for the masculine mind by our natural rulers! He applies by letter for the place, is accepted, and fetched over with family and furniture in his master's wagon. If he goes into the cottage provided, the trap falls. He will be had up before the magistrates if he refuses to fulfil his agreement of service, in writing or verbal. I must give instances. Here is one from an Oxfordshire paper of a couple of months ago. A labourer is inducted as I have described. He stays one day and goes. His plea is that he had not seen the inside of the cottage; that it was raining, and that he had no choice but to put his furniture and family under cover. The master's son says he took him round, and that he had "a chance" of seeing the inside before he took the place.

I have no doubt he might have seen it if he had insisted. But labourers, as a fact, have no courage to insist. He had *not* seen it. Fined £2 6s.; a month's wages, I suppose.

Here is another case in which a man made the best of a bad business, but grumbled loudly. The inside was here also in fault. "Well, didn't you see it before you took it?" "I seed the *outside* right enough. But the master as took I round didn't *happen* to have the key wi' 'un." Trapped!

The story I am going to tell came from the poor woman concerned through a lady who repeated it to me immediately afterwards exactly as I tell it. The family were engaged by advertisement. On arriving they found the "good cottage" a hovel, and refused to take their things off the wagon. On going up to the house they saw the master, "a girt big man, dressed up to the nines," who dealt roundly with them. "So you're the new carter. And you don't like your cottage. Now I'll tell 'ee summut. You've got to go where you be put and do what you be bid. I don't want none of your chat." They return to the wagon, the things still loaded, the woman resolute, the neighbours amused. The master comes down and bullies. The woman declares that she will spend the night where she is. The master goes away. On returning he changes his tactics and addresses the husband. "Now, don't you go on like this here, a-making a fool of I afore all the village! Come up to the house and talk it over reasonable."

He goes. The woman stays with the things and children. By and by at dark night he comes back "as drunk as ever I seed 'un." The things are put in. Trapped! "Why didn't you go to the clergyman?" asked my informant, scandalized. "Clergyman! why he and Mr. Blank be as thick as two thieves!"

A labourer came to a place by train. He wanted to "see things." The master met him and never lost sight of him till he put him into the train again after he had signed his agreement. The man came and stayed the twelvemonth he had agreed for. No more. *He did not even get the cottage he had been shown.* Trapped!

Here is a Hampshire case. The main facts are that the man was promised a good cottage and got one which, he said, was a bad one. That a number of labourers left the farm after he came, so that his position was different from what it would have been had the farm been full-handed. That his "little boys" (lads) were compelled to do work he had never agreed that they should do, and were paid next to nothing. Three were put to work, and two shillings a week was paid. It was admitted that the boys had had "a rough time for a bit," in consequence of shorthandedness. The man thought he had not been fairly treated, and left. He had a sickly wife and ten children. The cottage had only two bedrooms. He gave eight days' notice. He was fined with costs *eight guineas* for having broken his signed agreement. I inquired privately into the case from people who were in a position to know the circumstances. There was also some correspondence about it in the papers. He had the character of being a steady labourer. The impression left on my mind was that his place had become almost intolerable. What could he do? Prosecute his master for breach of contract? Farmers would laugh at the very idea. Once in the trap, he had to stay—or pay whatever fine country magistrates might impose.

The words used by the employer, the boys had "a rough time for a bit," cover a good deal. I will give you an instance.

The Society for Preventing Cruelty to Children was called in to help two poor boys signed away by their father (by his mark: he could not read or write), under an avowedly illegal agreement decorated with a sixpenny stamp to impress the signer, for two years to a farmer. The Society removed them at once, their condition of cold, filth, and misery being extreme. The excuse given (I heard it with my own ears) was that "life was a bit rough on a farm."

The conclusion of the whole matter is this. The law says to the labourer, "Caveat emptor." It does not protect him from sharp practice. There is no public opinion to which he can appeal. His sons drift away to the towns.



I was told once as a fact of an aged labourer who bound all his children *by an oath* never to bring up a boy to the land. Can any one wonder at it?

Some months ago I read in a London paper that labourers from town did not get on with farming employers because they would not understand that "a farmer's word was his bond." That is where it is. If the labourer is taken round by a possible master to see a cottage, for instance, and disputes the great man's assertion or insists upon seeing it for himself, he "gives offence." He had better not take the place after that. If he takes things upon trust and finds that he has been done, he has practically no remedy. And the master is utterly unabashed.

Another thing is that country labourers are shy. To enter into sanitary details with a well-dressed man of dominant manners is extremely difficult to them. One came to me a year or so ago and asked me what he was to do. I can't enter into details. I think they would surprise you. He had been taken round, and the master had assured him on the subject with a comprehensive wave of the hand, "*That's all right.*" Of course, nothing could be done. He had been trapped.

I must pass very slightly over many things which combine to make the labourer's lot distasteful, void of savour, if not disgusting. I may mention (as I once wrote something on the subject that was met with a good deal of contradiction) that the immense, well-conducted farm of which I have spoken has, of course, swallowed up several considerable holdings, the residences on which—good sizable houses—are empty. There is no letting them. Gentlefolk of moderate means will not bury themselves in country villages. No one knows better than I do how very trifling is the difference to the labourers that the presence in a village of an independent family of small means can make. But it does make a difference, just as the presence of a decent passenger makes a difference to the crew of a merchant ship commanded by a brutal skipper. The passenger is powerless. But he sees, and the skipper knows it. I place the general and increasing absence of small gentry as a contributory cause of the distaste for the village life felt

by the labourer. There is no one to break the long *tête-à-tête* between master and man. *Except the parson.*

**The labourer and the Church.**—In speaking of the parson and the Church I tread on dangerous ground. Let me begin by saying that parsons are almost invariably good and well-meaning men. My charge against them may almost be summed up in a rustic joke. The sign of "The Farmer's Man" is not an uncommon one among village public-houses. The joke is that it ought to be taken down from the inn and hung up over the parsonage door. The parson is "the farmer's man." It can hardly be otherwise. According to the prevailing ecclesiastical theory, his object is to elevate the Church. The Church is to elevate the people. To do this, to give the Church the dominating influence necessary to her efficient action, the cordial co-operation of the leaders of the village world is indispensable. And it is not to be had for nothing. The payment made is simply this. The priest is to "pass by on the other side" while the farmer deals with the labourer. It is not his business to take a part in disputes. He is a man of peace—as far as his own village goes. His churchwardens are farmers. They are the Aaron and Hur who hold up the hands of Moses. So he conciliates them. He conciliates everybody of influence. He is perfectly civil to the publicans, whose very existence depends upon their success in making labourers steady sots. He has a friendly greeting for the grocer, and knows nothing of adulteration and short weight. It is very unfortunate that cottages should be so bad. Encroachments on village rights are not within his province. Sometimes his desire to be pleasing to the great men of his flock goes further. Labourers very seldom use forcibly descriptive expressions. The turnips their grandfathers fed on have got into their blood. Yet I heard of one who was moved to speech after listening to an address in which a parson exhorted a number of labourers to be properly grateful for the generosity of their masters. "It was enough," he said, "to make a dog sick." I have felt the same myself.

A man and his master fell out. "Go to the parson and

ask him what *he* thinks," said the master. "Why, you know, sir, what *he* would say," said the man.

I might go on. But I won't. Parsons are good men. But their very virtues keep the labourers down. They "seek peace and ensue it" at the cost of justice. Right and wrong are not merely the government and the opposition. Once admit party methods, and wrong infallibly prevails. It has prevailed. And the Church (like the man in Charles Lamb's celebrated thesis) "never knows it." She goes on. "I wonder you will still be talking, Signor Benedick. Nobody marks you." In a village nobody "marks" what the Church says.

We have all heard of Mithridates, the king of Pontus, who ate poison till he was poison-proof. So in "*Hudibras*," the "King of Cambay, whose daily food Is asp, and basilisk and toad." Well, an English village is saturated with religion until it is religion-proof. Everybody goes to church, immense pressure is brought to bear to get the old men and women confirmed, most people are communicants. And religion, as a rule of conduct or a motive power, is absolutely non-existent. Why?

The success of the Church is the extent to which she can command the attendance of the village at her services. That is gaugeable. The Church is the mill that, theoretically, grinds congregations into Christians. But there is something wrong with the machinery. They come out, not contrite, not "ground up," but exactly what they went in.

Let us look back. In 1846, before the repeal of the Corn Laws, can anything have been more horrible than the condition of the country labourer? That was the very time when the Oxford movement was in the first flush of its youthful energy. An immense deal was done—for the restoration of churches. Erroneous ideas about Gothic architecture were severely dealt with. But the clergy thought infinitely more of crocketts and finials than of cottages and cesspools. Five-and-twenty years later, at the time of the Agricultural Labourers' Union, it was exactly the same thing. The Church was contented that things should stay as they were. She saw no need of re-

form. It is said that she has undergone a complete change since : and the farmers also. What has brought about this wonderful, this *most* wonderful change ?

No explanation is given. Is it not strange that the labourer should not have shared in it ? He has sunk morally, it appears, while his spiritual guide and his kindly and tender employer have gone up. What is the natural inference ? That the two have (wittingly or not) joined forces to keep him down.

For many, many years the position of Moses lay open to the acceptance of the Church. All she had to do was to qualify by slaying an Egyptian or two, by ranging herself definitely on the side of the oppressed. But the fear of families, as Job says, is too much for her.

In the forties, as in the seventies, she stood like a hen with a brood of ducklings, clucking reprobation while her charge faced the Red Sea. It was only when assured that the passage could be made dry-foot that she timidly ventured over.

The labourer hears the parson denounce from the pulpit the vices he condones in the street. He sees him greet with perfect friendliness a wealthy man known to all as an impudent thief of village rights, or the owner of tenanted cottages hardly fit for pigs, or a glutton and a soaker whose example makes his labourers sots. And he draws the natural conclusion. The parson is the farmer's man. The law is against him, the master is against him, and the parson maintains a benevolent neutrality.

To sum up. The law is dreaded by the labourer, not regarded as a protector. It is administered by men who mostly belong to the class who set it in movement against him. The clergyman identifies himself socially with the same class. Any power of combination that labourers might possess is nullified by the insecurity of their tenure as cottagers. He has no one to turn to in trouble.

What has the labourer to regret in leaving his village ? Home ties have grown very weak. "The home" means, in rustic parlance, the beds and chairs and tables, "the bits of sticks" a family has got together. The tied cottage is no more to the labourer than a borrowed umbrella.



Village life is very dull. There is nothing communal in it. The school is the property of the parson and the managers, generally farmers. The poor have got to send their children. There their interest practically ceases. They want them to become half-timers as soon as possible, that is all. The Church gives them no interest. They have no voice in its management, and are fed with this doctrine or that as it pleases the patrons. At best, it represents to them the "circus" which Lord Salisbury said was more to their taste than a council.

**The decay of the village band.**—Sixty years ago music still survived in country villages. What killed it? The Church. The old church band was too independent for the clergyman of the Oxford movement. The "musicianers," as they were called, used to quarrel in an unseemly way. Disputes among the band were got rid of by something very like the summary process of the father who cuts his little boy's head off to cure him of toothache. The band was suppressed and a harmonium substituted. Away went fiddles and brass with the bass viol and the "old serpent" at their head into the limbo of the village past. (The old serpent was a brass instrument of mysterious convolution.) Music was promoted from the fireside to the schoolroom or the vicar's parlour, where the choir met for practice. The old fiddles were hung up and forgotten. Only the other day I was told by a lady of great musical accomplishment of an attempt she was making to get up a string band in a large parish. People laughed at her. How were poor people to buy violins? But nearly all the instruments wanted were there. In many poor families the old fiddles had been kept, though the art of playing had been utterly forgotten.

The intention of the clergy was admirable. A decorous worship, and the village boys brought under the influence of the Church. That is one side. On the other, the destruction of almost the last form of communal effort for a common end, the capture by "the powers that be" in a country parish, of a last little stronghold of the independence that has disappeared from our labouring population.



There are none such now ; the guns of the Church, directed by the landed interest, range unobstructed over a plain of dead and flat submission. Dissent ! Dissent pays homage at births and deaths and marriages. The chapel has little power to raise. The old Puritan spirit, in country villages at least, seems to have been squeezed out of it.

**Co-operative stores.**—What inducement is offered to the labourer to stay in the village ? I am told by a very competent authority that, reckoning quality and price, to deal at London stores is 25 per cent cheaper than to buy at the village shop. Besides, labourers are mostly in debt, and “beggars mustn’t be choosers.” That makes things still worse. The remedy, of course, is co-operation. But how are families to co-operate when neighbourhood is not permanent ? Besides which, mutual trust has perished with community of interest. It has been atrophied by want of exercise.

Half a dozen villagers might conceivably club together to let some lady, for instance, whom they all know, get them a side of the best bacon from the stores at the price they paid for the very worst at the shop, and divide it. She would certainly be accused of partiality, but *perhaps* not of absolute dishonesty. But to do such a thing among themselves would be out of the question.

Fixity of tenure must precede co-operation, and until co-operation is the rule the labourer will continue to be despoiled in every petty transaction of his existence. One attraction of the city for him is that there he gets more choice and better value for whatever little money he has. Whatever he may possibly regret in the “land of Egypt, the house of bondage,” it is not the flesh-pots. A “penn’-’orth of fried fish” in Whitechapel is probably a tastier meal than the escaped ploughboy has ever put into his mouth.

**Village schools.**—What does the village school do with the brains entrusted to it ? Brains are valuable. The Yankees are teaching us that. Well, in one village school I know, with an average attendance of between eighty and

ninety, I cannot hear on inquiry that any lad educated there has risen in the last twenty years above the position of a mere labourer. Go to the town or stay in the village ; it is all one. Schooling directed by the Church and the Land has naturally turned out the article wanted by the Church and the Land—men of low intelligence and no enterprize. There are no games, and there is none of the initiative that comes of games. There is no recreation ground, no village green. The 3,500 acres of the village are practically divided into three great farms, sprinkled with the remains of former smaller homesteads. There was in old times a recreation ground. Old men have told me of the back-swording and wrestling that went on there. It was “ absorbed ” long ago, whether legally or illegally I know not.

**Remedies.**—To suggest remedies hardly comes within the limits of my subject. If I touch upon that I must be brief indeed. And every word may be a bone of contention. Well, the great farmer stops the way. No progress is possible as long as he dominates the situation. We must call into existence a class of small, independent cultivators, the natural growth of which will progressively thrust him off the track. Some small beginnings have been already made. The results show, I think, that the machinery provided by law (Agricultural Holdings Act, 1892—result, 700 or 800 acres) will not work. Local government has become the appanage of acres. Parish councils, rural district councils, county councils, they all represent the essence of landed interest in various degrees of concentration. And the classes that now enjoy a practical monopoly of the land will never efficiently help in dispossessing themselves.

Now, what part of England has the largest interest in the land of England's being made the most of ? The country ? Or the town ? The town population is four to one of the country population. And a large proportion of the number represented by the one only lives by sufferance on the land. This is the case with almost the whole of agricultural labourers. The evils inflicted upon the great

majority by this insignificant minority are, I think, the following :—

1. Dearness of food arising from low productivity of land.
2. The burden of providing labour for country men.  
The land does not take her share of the task of finding employment for the working men of England, but shuffles it off upon the towns.
3. The consequent congestion of the towns.
4. The ruin of the country as the breeding-field which ought to keep up the vigour of the town populations.
5. The closing of the country to the towns, so that increased facilities of locomotion do not do anything like the good to the towns that they should.

The moral I draw is that the towns should claim the right of dictating to England the way in which the land should be put to profit. The great majority of the classes nearest the land, squires and farmers and parsons, are disqualified respectively by self-interest, by religious prejudice that scruples at anything that may lead to the mental enfranchisement of the poor, and by sheer sluggishness of intellect joined to a blind selfishness without parallel in any class of English society. The land and the labourer have hitherto been left to them. And we want a change of management.

I should like to say something of the last of the evils I have enumerated. The closing of the country to the towns.

Take a mechanic with 35s. a week. He wants country air. There is the bicycle and there is the beanfeast. One means dust, the other drink. If he is enterprising, he will go down to Brighton or Ramsgate and change the asphalte of the streets for the asphalte of the promenade and a crowded park for a stretch of crowded sand. Lodgings are dear, so is food. He gets uncommonly little refreshment for the good money and the priceless holiday he throws away there. To go down and spend his three days in a country village never occurs to him. And rightly. But suppose it does. What is he to do? Take lodgings in a cottage? If he is a decent man it would turn his

stomach. In a beer-house? Hardly better. The food would be uneatable, the price calculated by his coat. At the lowest, it would be three times that at which he could feed himself well in London. What is he to do with himself? The park is closed, the downs warn him off with a threatening notice. "Farmer Blank," he is told, "doesn't like people trespassing in his fields." The churchyard or the bar-parlour, he may spend his day in either and welcome. Perhaps—not generally—there is a village green, with a goose or two. It is a fine evening, but there are no children at play. He asks. "Ay, the farmers get up a match at cricket among 'emselfes once or twice i' summer." "Don't the boys play?" "Naw. Summon gied 'em a bat, but they bin and lost the ball."

He returns to London in despair and disgust.

Let us suppose thirty or forty small independent holders to have taken the place of three or four large farmers. From what we know of Denmark, Belgium, France, Holland, and of recent experiments in Ireland, we have reason to believe that co-operation will have largely taken the place of the individual struggle for life that now makes of an English village a den of hungry beasts. We may hope that in a few years villagers will have re-learnt the forgotten art of enjoyment. They will have learnt to feel with energetic conviction that the natural beauties that surround a village are the property of the village, as far as the *enjoyment* goes that neither does material damage nor interferes with other legitimate enjoyment. They will have learnt to believe that the maddest dog in England is the Dog in the Manger, and when such a one shows his nose in a village their belief will be very apt to take an active form.

Views are not damaged by being looked at; it does not spoil timber to sit in the shade of a tree; grass is little hurt by children's picking cowslips in cowslip time; black-berrying breaks few hedges.

**A new village industry.**—You here know better than I do to how many Londoners "each simple joy the country yields" would be an attraction and a real rest and refresh-



ment, if they could only come by them. I look forward to a time when the entertainment of London visitors will be one of the great industries of country villages. When the country will be to London what Switzerland is to Europe. When the communal guest-house will "do" a London visitor *well* for 2s. 6d. a day and night, and bring a handsome profit to the community. When relations of friendship will exist between townsmen and countrymen, and when the born rustic who happens to be a native of Whitechapel will quite naturally and easily take the place of the born Londoner who came into the world at Stoginton. When a girl going up to service in Town will find that she has there a circle of acquaintances made in the country, and holiday London, instead of swarming like bees to the treacle-pots of Ramsgate and Hastings, will scatter itself over the villages within a radius of fifty or sixty miles. A game of bowls under a tree is pleasanter than "Aunt Sally" on the sands; a stretch over high downs and sandwiches under a may-bush are better than the foulness of the sea beach at the great tripping places and the heart-sickening uniformity of the cheap restaurant.

London should remember that the restoration of the labourer to the land in the character of an independent peasant may mean to London the opening of several hundred places of enjoyment; to many thousands of Londoners, themselves only two or three generations away from the country, the reawakening of that natural love of fields and leaves which exists in them so strongly as children and is so terribly obscured as they grow up by the uncounteracted influences of the public-house and the music-hall. London should remember, too, that it is better that the country should send up to recruit her population young freemen, with a happy boyhood behind them, than heart-broken drudges escaping from a bitter servitude.

There is no making a Garden City of London. But the whole country within a radius of seventy or eighty miles may be made a garden of pleasaunce for Londoners to enjoy, with wrong to none, with infinite good to many, and to the general benefit of England.

Only—THE GREAT FARMER STOPS THE WAY.



### III. STATE-AID FOR AGRICULTURE<sup>1</sup>

By T. S. DYMOND

*Late Lecturer to the Essex County Council.*

IN addressing meetings of farmers up and down the country, the late Minister of Agriculture, Mr. R. W. Hanbury, never failed to ask his audience in what direction they desired that "the Government should do more for Agriculture," but he never seems to have got a satisfactory reply except from those who advocated an import duty on corn.

As a matter of fact, "protection" does not assume an important position in the assistance given by the State to agriculture in Hungary. It is true that, owing to the *Zollverein* with Austria, there is a heavy import duty on corn, intended to protect the Hungarian farmers, but the farmers feel it to be a very doubtful advantage, because, while the Austrians would in any case buy the Hungarian wheat as the cheapest and best procurable, the import duty on agricultural machinery imposed to protect the Austrian machinists (which it fails to do) is to the Hungarians a grievous burden.

There is, however, a form of protection given in Hungary, as in all the sugar-beet growing countries of the Continent, to which special reference must be made, viz. the rebate on exported sugar, a grant so considerable that it makes it possible to sell Hungarian sugar in Great Britain for half the price it is retailed at in Hungary itself, because it pays the producers better to export their sugar than to sell it at home except at an absurdly high price. Hungary is almost a purely agricultural country, and practically the whole population is directly or indirectly dependent upon agriculture. The farmers, then, are taxing themselves in

<sup>1</sup> *A Lecture to the Fabian Society, May, 1903.*

order to aid certain localities to grow sugar (localities which are limited in area, for sugar-beet growing demands a sugar factory in the immediate neighbourhood), and the whole population is, besides, paying an enormous price for this article of food. In spite, therefore, of certain advantages which the sugar-beet industry possesses, e.g. the large quantity of labour it necessitates and the value as cattle food of the refuse pulp, it only needed the countervailing duties on bounty-fed sugar recently imposed in India—formerly one of the best markets for Hungarian sugar—and the recommendations of the Brussels Convention, to cause the country to welcome the prospect of casting off a heavy burden.

From “protection” we may therefore pass to a description of other means of assistance afforded by the State in the direction of (*a*) agricultural education, (*b*) the scientific development of agriculture, and (*c*) the commercial development of agriculture.

It must first be explained that Hungary consists of a vast plain, surrounded by a great tract of hilly country, rising in places into stupendous mountain ranges, whose highest summits are never free from snow. The inhabitants are as diversified as the country, for the Magyars are quite outnumbered by immigrant Slavonic, Teutonic, or Latin races, all of them differing not only in dress, language, religion, and customs, but also in intelligence, ability, and inclinations.

With the exception of an insignificant minority engaged in mining, mechanical, or chemical industry, the whole population is directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture. The farmers may be divided into three classes: (1) the magnates who farm their ten to fifty thousand acres; (2) the gentry with their five to fifteen hundred acres; and (3) the peasants who farm in holdings of less than 120 acres, just 50 per cent. of the whole of the cultivated land of the country (excluding forest). These peasant freeholds are for the most part between 8 and 120 acres in size, but in some parts of the country, owing to the Hungarian custom of dividing a property on the death of a father equally between his sons, the holdings through several

generations have become reduced to the size of a mere allotment of half an acre and upwards, an area far too small to maintain a peasant and his family, who are therefore obliged to eke out a livelihood by acting as labourers on the large estates and taking as payment, not wages in money, but a certain fixed proportion of the produce of their labour.

**Agricultural education.**—Excluding the means taken for elementary and secondary education, agricultural education is afforded by the following institutions:—

1. The Agricultural Academy at Magyaróvár, an institution which ranks with Hohenheim, Wageningen, and Copenhagen as one of the first of the agricultural colleges of the world, intended for those who are destined to fill the highest agricultural positions (average attendance, 157).

2. Four agricultural colleges, ranking with the very best of our own colleges, intended for the sons of the gentry or large farmers (average attendance at each, 125).

3. Twenty-one tillage schools, for the sons of peasant farmers, who receive a two-years' course of training in practical farming (average attendance at each, 26).

4. An immense number of winter schools of agriculture in the villages for the sons of peasants (total yearly attendance, 300,000).

5. Itinerant teaching by a staff of over 200 travelling lecturers and experts, attached for the most part to the staff of the Agricultural Ministry.

6. Educational institutions for special industries, including (1) a veterinary college, a huge and splendidly equipped institution; (2) an arboricultural college and four schools for foresters; (3) a dairy high-school and four schools for dairymen and women; (4) a horticultural college and five schools for gardeners; (5, 6, and 7) a poultry-farming, a bee-farming, and a meadow culture school; and (8) a viticultural course and eight schools for vine dressers.

7. Eighty model peasant farms in the respective counties, each equipped with the implements and stock considered most suitable for the district, and five great State farms which, while primarily intended for other purposes,

also serve for education and demonstration, and to which parties of farmers are carried by the railways at reduced fares from all over the country.

8. The great agricultural museum at Budapest.

The whole of this enormous scheme is supported and in most cases maintained by the State. Every year further developments take place, old institutions are enlarged and new institutions built, and the policy of the Government clearly is not to wait till the demand becomes imperative, but, by the provision of the fullest facilities for instruction, to encourage the people to take advantage of it. In this, as in every other agricultural development in Hungary, the Government leads the way and the people follow.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the details of teaching or equipment, or to dwell upon the marvellous collections in the museums, which possess of themselves an educational value I could never have believed had I not conducted a party of farmers through them and found how intensely interesting from a practical standpoint did they find the contents; but one important feature must be clearly impressed—that in every institution for higher teaching, and even those intended for the training of peasant farmers, education is associated with research, it being realized that, for the future of agriculture to be prosperous, it is important not only to teach the students what is known already, but to impress upon their minds, by this association, how incomplete is our knowledge and how much remains to be discovered.

**Scientific development.**—This brings us, then, to the means taken by the State for the scientific development of agriculture by experimental and research work. The whole of this is under the control of a Departmental Central Committee, on which all branches of the work are represented, and the purpose of which is to encourage and control the harmonious working of the stations (and thus to prevent duplication and overlapping), to direct what experiments are to be carried out, to advise the Minister of Agriculture in what direction development is required, and to publish the results in the form of bulletins. The following is a



brief description of the stations under the control of this Committee :—

1. The Geological Institute at Budapest makes a scientific study of the soil in relation to agriculture, and publishes maps.

2. The National Institute for Meteorology possesses an observatory, and issues weather forecasts daily to the press, institutes, subscribers, and about 400 telegraph offices in rural districts, telegraphs rainfall statistics with the object of providing means to prevent the flooding of agricultural land in districts subject to inundation, and promotes defence against gales.

3. The National Chemical Institute and Experiment Station undertakes the analysis and control of fertilizers, feeding stuffs, etc., with a view to prevent adulteration. There are also chemical experiment stations connected with the Academy at Magyaróvár and at each of the four agricultural colleges before mentioned.

4. The Bacteriological Institute in connection with the Veterinary College at Budapest carries on defence against swine fever and other contagious diseases, and prepares and distributes mallein and tuberculin.

5. The Central Seed-testing Station at Budapest and those in connection with each of the Agricultural Colleges and the Agricultural Academy at Magyaróvár undertake the control of seeds and feeding stuffs with the object of preventing adulteration ; they carry on experiments with a view to developing fertility, feeding, value etc. ; and they diffuse a knowledge of weed seeds and defence against weeds and plant parasites. Some 40,000 examinations are made annually.

6. The Experiment Station for Agricultural Implements at Magyaróvár examines all new machinery introduced and advises farmers as to its value.

7. The Experiment Station for Plant-breeding in Magyaróvár has for its object the improvement of species, the acclimatization of new species, the improvement of pastures, and the diffusion of knowledge on the rational manuring of crops. A part of this work is carried out in conjunction with farmers who in consideration of the free supply of manure or seed agree to undertake the work, but the



experiments requiring more accurate observation are arranged in conjunction with the other agricultural colleges, identical experiments being thus made in several parts of the country.

8. The Entomological Station at Budapest has for its object to obtain and disseminate information regarding insects injurious in agriculture and the means of defence against them, and in urgent cases to undertake the defence. Correspondents are appointed in different parts of the country.

9. The Tobacco Experiment Station in connection with the Agricultural College at Debreczen is established with the object of counteracting the decline of tobacco culture during recent years, by improving the quality, productiveness, proper cultivation, and generally increasing the profitableness of its culture.

10. The Experiment Station for Plant Physiology and Pathology at Magyaróvár has chiefly occupied itself up to the present with the investigation of a disease in sugar-beet; the cause of this disease and the remedies having now been fully ascertained, it is now carrying on experiments on smut, rust, and other fungoid diseases of corn.

11. The Experiment Station for Feeding of Cattle at Budapest has for its object to ascertain the most economical feeding stuffs grown in Hungary for the breeds of cattle produced in the country, i.e. to apply the results of German and American experiments to Hungarian conditions.

12. The Experimental Wool-sorting Station at Budapest was established with the hope of counteracting the very serious decline in sheep breeding and wool production in the country.

13. The Ornithological Station at Budapest has mainly in view the protection of wild birds useful in agriculture, and publishes popular well-illustrated works on the subject to the general public, and to farmers in particular.

14. The Experimental Station for Brewing at Kassa has the general aim of developing the industry.

Such is the programme of scientific work carried on by, and at the entire cost of, the State.

**Commercial development.**—In the commercial development of the agriculture of Hungary we find that the

State takes a much more leading part than in most Continental countries. The grants made for the reclamation of land, the loans given to the agricultural credit banks, and the appointment of agricultural commissioners in foreign capitals, have their counterparts in many countries, but, in Hungary, beyond all this, the State does not hesitate to foster, by direct financial aid, farming in any depressed part of the country, or any branch of agricultural industry that is capable of development. And it should here be mentioned that Hungarian Governments have not been afraid to embark on industrial enterprise themselves, for to the State now belong the principal railways; it is the owner of silk, hemp, flax, sugar, and many other factories in connection with the State farms, it is proprietor of the world-renowned baths of Hercules and the delightful pleasure resorts of the Northern Carpathians, and it owns and manages 3,700,000 acres of forest. But besides this the State farms, and farms to the highest possible advantage, 163,466 acres of land in its five great stud farms, farms which not only serve as models to the whole country of what farming ought to be, not only serve to produce the best stallions, the best bulls, the best seed for distribution through the country, and thus in the most effectual way tend to the improvement of stock, but which also yield a revenue to the State of £300,000 a year.

I propose now to give examples of the means adopted.

To assist the farmers in districts hardest hit by agricultural depression, seed wheat, seed potatoes, linseed, etc., are distributed at low cost, or in deserving cases absolutely free. Potatoes being an important crop in these districts, special inducements are held out for the establishment of small distilleries, the excise giving peculiar advantages to these distilleries, and the State railway conveying, when the potato crop fails, maize for distilling from other districts at exceptionally low rates.

To encourage the cultivation of malting barley in districts suitable for barley growing, good seed is grown on, and distributed from, the State farms in exchange for seed grown by the farmers, grants are made for the establishment of annual barley fairs, and a rebate of about 20 per

cent. is given by the State railways on the rates for carriage of malting barley for export.

To encourage silkworm culture, a home industry carried on, it is said, by the families of 100,000 peasants in the country, the State has established and owns 145 nurseries, at which several million mulberry trees are propagated yearly, a silkworm breeding station for providing and distributing the eggs, twenty-four cocooneries for collecting the silk, and five silk factories.

Flax, hemp, and hop culture are encouraged by grants towards the establishment of depots or markets, and by special reduced rates on the State railway.

Agricultural co-operation in the collection, manipulation, and marketing of agricultural produce, which is an important factor in the agricultural development of Hungary, has received the powerful encouragement of the State, firstly, by the distribution of co-operative literature, and, secondly, by direct grants in aid of co-operative enterprises. Such grants have been made to the Farmers Market Hall Supply Co-operative Society in order to enable them to start the systematic collection and marketing of eggs; to the co-operative dairies to aid their formation; to the Central Co-operative Distributing Society, to enable it to start co-operative stores in the villages in congested districts; and to the National Co-operative Society of Hungarian Wine Growers, in the form of the free use of wine cellars beneath the Board of Agriculture in Budapest. Lastly, a grant is given to the county agricultural societies, co-operative organizations as many of these are, amounting in 1901 to £8,270, to encourage and assist them in their invaluable labours for the development of agriculture in their respective counties.

The co-operative credit movement has also had the powerful support of the State. "In order to facilitate and control the co-operative popular credit movement" (I quote from the recently issued report of the Minister of Agriculture upon the work done by his department during his five years term of office) "the Legislature passed a special Act in 1898 on the agricultural and industrial credit banks, under which a part of the shares were subscribed

by the Exchequer, a part by the already existing co-operative credit societies, and the remainder, at the request of the Minister of Agriculture, by some of the large land-owners. Since that time the central bank, so founded, has been very satisfactory as a working institution, and has helped the department in every way connected with local agricultural co-operation. The local branches in 1902 numbered 1,566, with 317,851 members.

"The action of the Department since starting the central bank has been practically limited to helping the formation of local banks which, situated in the economically worst parts of the country, cannot start themselves without assistance. The grant is limited to some hundreds of crowns. The greater number of these are situated in the congested districts of the north-eastern part of the country. The Department being anxious to form these co-operative banks in order to emancipate the poor farmers from the local money lenders" (Polish Jews who charged, I may interpolate, 20, 30, or even 40 per cent on loans, and who have been reduced to a condition of most miserable penury by the loss of their business), "not only strongly advocates the system, but being a local land-owner everywhere itself, subscribes a part of the shares and deposits money. These banks in the neglected parts of the country combine credit-giving with store-keeping."<sup>1</sup>

It may be added to this account of the Minister that in connection with some of the local credit banks co-operative granaries have been established, a system which has a special advantage in Hungary, as it is there the custom for the buyer to travel from farm to farm purchasing corn, at his own price, from the farmers.

Having given some examples of the aid given by the State towards the commercial development of agriculture in Hungary, I propose now to deal somewhat more generally with certain typical branches of agriculture which have received State support on educational and scientific as well as commercial lines. An important point that is

<sup>1</sup> The whole report has since been translated by Mr. Andrew György and published under the title "The State and Agriculture in Hungary," Macmillan, 1908, 5/- net.—EDITOR.



probably already self-evident should be borne in mind in considering what follows, viz. that in Hungary it is the deliberate intention of the Government to take the initiative in every forward movement, and by doing so and by granting aid to obtain control. The branches of agriculture I shall deal with are fruit culture, stock breeding, and forestry.

**Fruit culture.**—The climate of Hungary is eminently suitable for fruit, but up to the nineties the imports very nearly equalled the exports. Attention had been drawn during the previous decade to the suitability of the sandy and almost barren districts of the plain for fruit culture, because vineyards had been successfully started upon them to replace the mountain vineyards devastated by the phylloxera. Steps were therefore taken to utilize these districts for the development of fruit culture.

With this object in view, the first step taken by the Department was to decide what fruits and what varieties were suitable for cultivation in each district. Lists were then drawn up and sent to the agricultural colleges and the orchards on the State farms.

The next step was the planting of a number of nurseries in different parts of the country for propagating the varieties of fruit decided upon, and the forestry stations were utilized for cultivating the proper stocks for grafting. Between 1892 and 1901 twenty-five State orchards were established altogether.

Next there followed the distribution and sale at very low charges of the fruit trees, fruit seedlings, wild fruit stocks, and grafted stocks thus propagated. To schoolmasters and clergymen fruit trees were given free, as also the seedlings and fruit stocks to the nurseries of parishes and agricultural and horticultural associations, who were required to supply fruit trees for planting the highways. In 1901 as many as 378,000 grafted stocks and over 2,000,000 seedlings were thus distributed. Even this vast number proved insufficient for the demand, and, to further increase the supply, prizes were given to those schoolmasters who in the parochial orchards produced the greatest number of grafted stems, and plum trees, being



more useful to poor farmers than anything else, were imported from Orleans and Angers to the number of 600,000.

Meanwhile steps were taken to provide the necessary instruction in fruit culture. The great horticultural school was established on the slopes of the Gellert Hill at Budapest for systematic, theoretical, and practical instruction. For orchard labourers four country schools of fruit culture were founded, in addition to which the State orchards served for their practical training. An industrial school at Budapest was made purely horticultural. The winter schools of agriculture in the villages for sons of peasant farmers were required to include fruit culture in their curricula, teachers of fruit culture were appointed to secondary and other schools, encouragement was given to schoolmasters in teaching the subject in the parochial schools by offering prizes to their pupils, courses of lectures were arranged for the road surveyors who would have the care of the fruit trees upon the highways, and courses of fruit growing were arranged for all schoolmasters and for a few clergy (for the clergy in Hungary, as in every country, are the best pomologists), of whom 172 applied for the twelve places offered! Lastly, the Department published a weekly paper, "The Fruit Gardener," and several treatises and popular pamphlets.

Finally came the question of the marketing and export of the produce. And here comes the advantage of the control that had been exercised in only encouraging the cultivation of a few kinds of fruit, the production of small lots of many kinds being the worst hindrance to an export trade. Grants were given to encourage the formation of local fruit shows, and of co-operative fruit marketing societies. Willow plantations for basket-making were started on the State farms, and gifts of willow seedlings made to parishes together with grants to enable them to prepare the land for willow plantations. Special low rates were charged by the State railway for export fruit, and reports upon the demand for fruit in Russia, Germany, Great Britain, and Scandinavia obtained from the respective consuls. For unsold fresh fruit the State began to hire out machines for cider making, spirit distilling, and

fruit drying to parishes and co-operative associations, and sometimes to give them free, and grants were made towards building two fruit-drying factories.

**Stock breeding and dairying.**—Equally comprehensive is the aid given by the State in these branches of agriculture, and also intensely interesting because the State itself farms 163,466 acres of land in the five great estates which serve for the production of the pure-bred stock which is distributed through the country with the object of improving the various breeds.

The aim of the Government is that a particular breed of horses or cattle should be bred by the farmers in a particular district, the object being to keep the breeds pure, to economize sires, and to enable buyers to know to what particular district they must go to purchase what they want. With this aim in view, each State farm breeds a particular class of horses or cattle; for each district of Hungary the Government decides upon the breed most suitable for encouragement, and the county councils publish particulars to the farmers as to where sires of this breed may be obtained.

With regard to horses no expense is spared; £125,000 is spent yearly in the interests of horse breeding. The stables at Kisbér contain some of our best English thoroughbreds purchased at almost fabulous prices, and fresh batches of pure-bred Arab horses are fetched from Arabia every year. The number of registered stallions owned by the State and hired out for public service at fees of from 6s. to 10s. is 3,100, which in 1901 covered as many as 119,114 mares, and in addition to these are 200 stallions hired out to private breeders. So strict is the control that a sire belonging to a private owner must not be used by his neighbours unless registered.

The management of the studs is admirable. All are under military control, and the men of the cavalry regiments serve their three years upon the farms, thus not only saving the State a heavy bill for labour, but learning all there is to know about horse breeding and gaining knowledge which they are able to turn to useful account on returning to their own farms or holdings. The policy of

the country in this respect seems to be abundantly justified, for nothing is so astonishing as the excellence of the horses bred by the small holders, who in one small village I visited were able to produce some fifty or sixty horses, any one of which would have looked well in Rotten Row. In any part of the Great Plain good post horses can be had. I think the most vivid impression that any one who has travelled in Hungary will bring back is driving over that limitless expanse behind a pair of Hungarian horses, on and on, mile after mile, now racing madly along the soft unmetalled roads, mere cart tracks, canopied in a cloud of dust, or sweeping dustless over trackless turf.

Similar steps are taken for the development of cattle breeding. The whole country is divided into twenty districts, to each of which an inspector is appointed, who possesses such powers as will enable him to induce farmers to develop their business in the direction approved by the Department. Every year an immense number of good bulls are sold from the State farms, generally to the parishes or village communities, a tax being raised by the parish council for the purchase, the bulls being thereafter available for the use of any farmer living in the parish. In 1901 3,428 bulls were thus distributed. Stock markets are also organized and prizes for the best cattle given, the grant for this purpose amounting in 1901 to £3,300.

Particular attention is paid to dairy cattle. The native Hungarian cattle being primarily draught cattle, a large number of the best stock from Alpine herds of dairy cattle are annually imported for breeding purposes (325 in 1901). The dairying industry, as already mentioned, is assisted by five Government dairy schools and by direct grants to the co-operative dairies. So remarkable has been the development of the dairying industry since the first co-operative dairy was started in 1895, that the excess of exports over imports of dairy produce has increased from £57,000 in 1895 to £486,000 in 1901, an increase of more than eightfold.

Equally striking are the results of the fostering care of the State in the poultry industry. A State poultry farm and school has been started on the Crown estate of Gödöllő, and here the most suitable breeds are reared. These are

distributed in a remarkable way—the cock birds are exchanged with the farmers for common poultry, as many as 7,666 cock birds being exchanged in 1901; the same system applies to eggs for hatching. Still more has been done in conjunction with the Market Hall Supply Co-operative Society by establishing local egg-collecting stations, mostly in connection with the local co-operative dairies. By systematic sorting of the eggs, and by the elimination of the German middlemen, the price obtained by the farmers for exported eggs has been raised 30 or 40 per cent, and the export of poultry and eggs increased in five years by 80 per cent.

Another form of State-aid in stock breeding is the steps taken to eliminate contagious disease. Strict isolation regulations are imposed to prevent the spread of swine fever. A serious outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in 1893 was dealt with by the wholesale slaughter of the animals in infected yards, compensation being given in full, as many as 20,942 cattle being slaughtered in 1894 and £37,000 paid in compensation, measures which were entirely successful in stamping out the disease.

**Forestry.**—There is one other State-aided branch of agriculture to which reference must be made on account of its importance to this country—namely, forestry. The part of the report of the Minister of Agriculture that deals with this subject is somewhat apologetic. It points out that while the aid given is to the material benefit of the proprietor, it is also directly to the benefit of the nation, because (1) forest provides an article of national wealth which is in permanent readiness, (2) it promotes health, (3) it has a favourable climatical influence, and (4) it provides the raw material of a vast number of industries without recourse to import, besides which there is a vast amount of land in Hungary which it is otherwise impossible to render productive, and of which part, while barren, is an absolute danger to the surrounding districts. It is concluded that State-aid to the proprietors of such land is perfectly legitimate, both because it is to the public benefit, and because the afforestation cannot be remunerative for some years to the proprietors.



An Act was passed in 1879 which made it compulsory to afforest formerly deforested and now barren land, and it prevented the deforesting of land, which could not otherwise be profitably cultivated, unless an equal portion of barren land were afforested at the same time.

The State affords aid in this direction by establishing a central experiment station for forestry, four schools for foresters, and nurseries for forest trees in connection with each of the foresters' schools. From these nurseries seedlings are distributed free to proprietors, as many as 358,000,000, it is said, having been distributed between 1874-1901. Proprietors can, if they wish, give over to State management the land that they are compelled to afforest. The State also sometimes buys forest land, for example as a national pleasure resort or to prevent foreigners from acquiring large tracts for sporting purposes.

**Labour.**—Owing to American competition and consequent low prices of agricultural produce on the one hand, and to abundance of labour due to completion of public works and the introduction of labour-saving machinery on the other, the wages of agricultural labourers in the beginning of the nineties fell to a very low figure. The disaffection produced was accentuated by the working of an Act of 1876, disadvantageous to themselves as the agricultural labourers considered it to be, which imposed between farmer and labourer the necessity of contracts in all cases, and which required that agricultural labourers should be able to produce certificates of efficiency in certain cases, which certificates there seems to have been difficulty in procuring. Encouraged by the Social Democratic Party, the labourers secretly determined, in order to secure higher wages, to refuse to perform their contracts with the farmers as soon as the harvest in 1897 was begun. The Department conceiving that its duty was to aid the farmers to get in the harvest where actual contracts had been made, made ample preparation, chiefly by providing some thousands of labourers from the State stud farms and forests, and, although the strike was very widespread and the feeling aroused very bitter, harvesting operations were eventually safely performed.



The result of the strike was to strengthen the demand for revision of the Act of 1876, and the Department therefore promoted an Amending Act in 1898, the object of which was to facilitate the smooth working of the 1876 Act. There was an attempt to revive the strike in the summer of 1898, but it failed, partly owing to the same steps being taken by the Department to meet the emergency as in the previous year, and partly because the Department had included in the Amending Act a clause for facilitating the distribution of certificates, and a clause for establishing a labour bureau for the efficient interchange of labourers, and so equalizing the supply and demand in the various districts, in order to prevent the superabundant supply of labour in any district and the consequent lowering of wages. Under this clause every parish council must nominate a person to keep a list of employers and employed in the parish. Any surplus in supply or demand must be reported to the county council, who draws up weekly reports, which are sent back to the parishes on the one hand and to the central bureau on the other. This system of interchange between parishes or districts seems to work thoroughly well; it is further facilitated by a reduction of 50 per cent on the railway fares for labourers travelling to their work in another district and home again.

Simultaneously with this reform, the Department began to take measures for bettering the circumstances of the labourers. They began to establish popular libraries for labourers (there are now 1,068), to give grants to clergy and schoolmasters to enable them to establish reading-rooms, friendly societies, etc., and to give rewards to those clergy and schoolmasters who had been most successful in their labours. They award prizes to the labourers for efficient performance of their work (some 1,279 have been awarded), and yearly distribute 400 diplomas as a permanent recognition that the State recognizes their conscientious work and fidelity. Through the request of the Department, the agricultural societies recommenced in 1899 the old harvest feasts in order to promote the mutual interest of farmers and labourers in each other, and lastly the Department issues a popular weekly paper for labourers,

the circulation of which amounts to 43,000 copies, and which is published in Hungarian, Slovak, German, Roumanian, Servian, and Ruthenian. The total grant made by the Department from 1898 to 1902 towards bettering the condition of the labourers amounts to £66,000.

The last Act promoted by the Department for the benefit of the labourer (xvi., 1900) established a fund for insurance against accident, sickness, and old age, an Act of which the labourers, or their employers on their behalf, have eagerly availed themselves.

**Application to Great Britain and Ireland.**—With regard to education in, and the scientific development of, agriculture there is, with little exception, nothing done in Hungary which we cannot parallel in our own country. But the great difference is that, whereas in Hungary the systems adopted are applied to the whole country, with us there is, with the single exception of the control of contagious disease in farm stock, absolutely no general systematization whatever. In my own county farmers can have their sons given an agricultural education, can have field experiments carried out on their own class of land, the object of which is the increase in quantity and improvement in quality of their agricultural produce, and can control, by having analysis made, the manures, feeding stuffs, and seeds that they buy; but in the adjoining county they have no such privileges, and they are debarred from ours. It is the system of decentralization, of remitting to the county councils the responsibility of agricultural education, under which title almost all scientific development of agriculture is now carried on in this country, that is the difficulty in the way of the systematic application of any scheme to the whole country. The great variation in different parts of our country necessitates, of course, very different treatment, but the time must surely soon come when the experimental period of agricultural education has proved what the right treatment for each part of the country is, and every county should be persuaded to carry out its share of the work. *How* the systematization should be carried out, what counties should be grouped for the purpose, what means of per-

suasion should be adopted, and whether by the Board of Education or Board of Agriculture, is not my purpose to inquire. The Board of Agriculture has led the way in attempting to systematize the field experiments throughout the country and has utilized the Agricultural Education Association—an association of agricultural professors and teachers—in carrying out the scheme, and this small beginning may be the beginning of a far-reaching movement.

Next, with regard to the *commercial* development of agriculture, it must be remembered that the prosperity of a country devoid of colonies chiefly depends upon the prosperity of its industry, and that in Hungary agriculture is the only important industry. It is quite certain that the policy adopted has been a gigantic success, and that the country is going ahead by leaps and bounds as a direct consequence. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the knowledge that the State is ready to initiate any developments required discourages private enterprize. There is already a feeling of dissatisfaction abroad, a feeling of the powerlessness of individuals to develop an industry without State interference, that the initiative in any forward movement must come from the Government, and a feeling of resentment at the restraint and control which it is evident is and must be exercised by the State whenever State-aid is given.

And if there is this growing feeling against State-aid and interference (the two terms are almost interchangeable) in a nation so uncommercial and so primitive in many respects as the Hungarians, how much stronger would the feeling be with us. Our English farmers are intensely commercial; the barterings at the weekly market, the sale of corn by a farmer at 6d. a quarter better than his neighbour or the purchase of seed at 6d. less, is the bright spot in an otherwise monotonous existence, and all wish of sharing with others the advantages of a profit-sharing and co-operative undertaking is absent from a farmer's breast. I do not think that the farmers whom I accompanied to Hungary will ask again that the Government should do more for agriculture; they are rather imbued

with the idea that it is better to have too little State-aid than too much.

The commercial development of agriculture in this country is slowly but surely taking place as the result, not of State-aid, but of better education, and the development would take place far more quickly if agricultural education were better systematized in the whole country.

In certain directions, however, I believe that the example of Hungary might be advantageously followed. Strict laws should be enforced against deforesting. The deforesting of land in the Eastern Counties during the great corn years was a perfect calamity, for the land that was originally woodland was always the poorest land, and is quite unremunerative to cultivate in any other way. The afforesting of this land might well receive some encouragement, and the same may be said of enormous tracts in Scotland and Ireland, the afforesting of which would in a number of ways be to the inestimable advantage of the nation.

Again, the county agricultural societies and chambers of commerce might well be encouraged to develop in a commercial direction, perhaps by establishing depots for agricultural produce where the means for its disposal are defective, or studs for the sake of facilitating horse-breeding by the farmers, and especially by organizing agricultural labour bureaux in connection with a central bureau in London, which might possibly remedy the scarcity of labour, the greatest of all drawbacks to successful intensive farming in the home counties.

There can be no doubt, too, that credit banks would be a boon to the farmers in every part of the country.

It is, of course, manifest that Ireland needs entirely different treatment. The Irish and Hungarian temperament is not unlike in some respects. The Department of Agriculture in Dublin appears to be fully alive to the possibilities. Already it has adopted several means, similar to those adopted by the Hungarian Department of Agriculture, to foster the commercial development of the country, and there is every reason to believe that it will be equally successful.



## IV. THE REVIVAL OF AGRICULTURE

A NATIONAL POLICY FOR GREAT BRITAIN

BY THE FABIAN SOCIETY

THE decline of agriculture in Great Britain began about thirty years ago. The bad harvests of 1876-82 caused widespread ruin, while in the same period the introduction of very cheap ocean transport and the extension of agriculture in America and elsewhere led to a tremendous fall in prices. According to the Board of Trade figures, the fall in 1898-1902, compared with 1871-5, has been 37.7 per cent in corn, and 18.1 per cent in meat, bacon, and dairy produce. The effect on incomes derived from land has been catastrophic. The landlord's share, the gross annual value of lands assessed to income-tax under Schedule A (including tithe rent charge, ornamental gardens, gardens exceeding one acre, farmhouses and buildings, etc.) fell in Great Britain from £59,568,253 in 1879-80 to £42,507,895 in 1902-3. The average reduction in rent has thus been 28.5 per cent, but in some localities the fall has been as much as 60 per cent. The fall in the value of the fee simple is about the same, and small and encumbered owners have suffered most. Farmers' capital was largely swept away in the early years of the decline, and even now they have to live close and can save but little. The estimated amount of farmers' profits fell in Great Britain from £28,405,086 in 1879-80 to £14,288,974 in 1902-3, or one-half. Agricultural labourers alone have gained during the last thirty years; but although the average weekly earnings in England are now 18s. 3d., there is, according to the estimates made by Mr. Wilson Fox, of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, "a deficit of 2s. 0½d., if the value of food, the cost of rent, firing, light, clothes, and club is compared with the earnings of the head of the family (without allowing for any



expenditure on beer, tobacco, and household requisites).” The balance must be made good from the earnings of wife and children, from the garden, the poultry, or the pig.

Between 1871 and 1904 arable land in Great Britain has decreased by 3,122,000 acres, and permanent pasture has increased 4,668,000 acres. There has been a great change from corn raising to cattle rearing and dairy farming, with less employment of labour. Simultaneously imports have increased enormously, not only in grain and meat, but also in dairy produce, eggs, poultry, etc., where we might have hoped to hold our own.

**The sins of the landlords.**—The landlord system must bear a large share of the blame for the decay of agriculture. The bad times found many landlords with burdened estates and no reserve, saved in prosperous times, wherewith to keep their property in a state of efficiency. Placed in the position of the social and economic leaders of the rural districts, they have, as a class, largely devoted themselves to drawing their rents and trying to escape public burdens. They have not compelled their tenants to be good farmers; in fact, by obstructive rules and by annual tenancies, they have often prevented improvements. They have not stood between the agricultural labourers and their employers; on the contrary, by neglecting to provide a sufficient supply of sanitary cottages, they have powerfully contributed towards the rural exodus. Locally they have misused their economic strength for political and sectarian ends; while nationally they have set up a false ideal before the nation. To-day they still draw about £43,000,000, or three times the farmers’ profits, from the land of Great Britain, with, as the evidence before the Royal Commission on Agriculture showed, disastrous results to the nation. “The evidence goes to show that over-renting (1) has been a chief cause of depression in bringing farmers to ruin, and in deteriorating the condition of the land; (2) is even now very general; and (3) that the opinion that further reductions are necessary and inevitable is, among farming witnesses, practically universal. . . . There is much evidence to show that reductions are by no means universal, and that in many districts and

on many estates the system of temporary remissions or abatements, sometimes wholly insufficient to meet the times, is still common. In many cases, even in districts where depression is general, there would seem to have been neither reductions nor abatements of any kind." (Royal Commission on Agriculture Minority Report, F. A. Channing, M.P.) The main work of administration is done by a private service of estate agents, bailiffs, and foremen; and the landlord is a mere parasite on the industry of the country. As a class landlords have failed in their duty as "captains of industry," and it is only fitting that they should be swept aside to make room for some better system.

**The faults of the farmers.**—Farmers, as a body, have shown a great lack of that capacity and adaptability with which men in other occupations have met bad times. They have clung to the old idea that wheat growing was their only duty, and stubbornly resisted every attempt to persuade or coax them into better business methods. By sweating their labourers and vexing them with petty tyrannies, they drove them to the towns as soon as the way became open. If the blame lies mainly with a past generation, the present is not exempt. "Farmers rarely welcome new ideas," says Mr. Rider Haggard. To their inaction is due much of our dependence on foreign lands for food. Mr. R. E. Turnbull, the agricultural expert, says<sup>1</sup>: "Fully fifty per cent of the cattle marketed for beef in this country are of second or third quality, and whilst cattle of the best quality have given fairly remunerative prices for the food they have consumed, second quality cattle have seldom helped to improve the banking account. Third quality cattle, which probably formed one-eighth of the whole supply, have invariably caused a serious loss to the farmers who have bred them or fed them for beef. . . . Foreign competition can be successfully met alone by farmers who produce household foods of the best quality. There is vast room for improvement in fully half the herds and flocks in this country." In butter the British farmer cannot, price for price, supply the same quality as the

<sup>1</sup>Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, 5th Series, Vol. XV., 1903.

foreigner, while he has made no serious attempt to raise the large quantities of eggs, poultry, fruit, and vegetables demanded by our population. Even in milk, where he has a monopoly, he supplies only  $16\frac{1}{2}$  gallons per head of population yearly.

It is not denied that there are many capable farmers, just as there are some good landlords; but there are not enough of either class to go round. Nor is it questioned that in the best qualities of produce and cattle we more than hold our own. Nevertheless, our agriculture has not kept pace with the growth of our population; and in all the great mass products our farmers are beaten out of the field by the abundant cheap supplies from abroad, in many cases mainly because they have neglected the business side of their occupation, the marketing of their produce.

### Aims of the State.

#### I. UTILIZATION OF NATIONAL RESOURCES.

In presence of the failure of private enterprise as applied to agriculture the case for State intervention is complete. The objects which we must keep before us are several. Firstly, there is the utilization of the land as a part of the national resources at present allowed to run to waste. That we can ever become completely independent of foreign-grown food is probably impossible, yet that is no reason for not using to the full the resources which we possess. Cheap food is certainly welcome, but we cannot accept an economic situation which, if allowed to develop to its logical outcome, would lead to the abandonment of agriculture in Great Britain. The fertility of our soil is undoubted, and the quality of our products, when equal care is given, is not behind that of our competitors. The spectacle of untilled land in the country and unoccupied men in the towns is an indication of great material and intellectual waste.

#### 2. INCREASE OF AGRICULTURAL POPULATION.

In the second place, we wish to maintain and increase our agricultural population. There is no evidence that the people has degenerated from a state of physical excel-

lence in the remote past when no statistics were kept, and there is proof that the health of the towns has vastly improved from what it was half a century ago. On the other hand, it is certain that at present the conditions of life in towns are much more injurious to health than those in the country. However much may be done by better sanitation, shorter hours of work, and more reasonable forms of enjoyment, it is certain that for a long time to come factory towns and the working-class quarters in all large towns must continue to be undesirable places to live in. Even under highly improved conditions they must be defective in air and sunlight, and particularly disadvantageous to children. It is probable that in the future this will be altered, and that the working-classes will live in healthy suburbs at a distance from their places of work—that, in the current phrase, the towns will be “spread over the country.” But it is not probable that this development will be achieved within that period of time for which as wise politicians we must look forward in framing a policy. Without, therefore, deciding on the abstract merits of town and country life, or trying to determine what degree of suburbanity will carry the maximum of welfare, we must lay our plans for strengthening in the national interest in that section of our population which at present contains the greatest elements of health. Between 1851 and 1901 the number of adult males engaged in agriculture has fallen from 1,140,898 to 749,805, although one would have expected that the practical elimination of female labour (where there was a fall from 436,174 to 52,459) and the great decline in the employment of males under twenty (from 327,615 to 186,076)—both of these being healthy developments—would have to be compensated by an increase in the number of men. Naturally some uneasiness has been aroused, both on grounds of national health and because the loss of one great element of variety in national life is threatened. To find a solution for this part of our problem is by no means easy, for it involves the task of making agricultural life as attractive to the working-man as industrial life in cities. It involves something more than this; the apathy and stolidity which characterize the



agricultural labourer to-day—the evil effects of his life of isolation—must be removed. While we desire an increase of the agricultural population, we equally desire that the agricultural worker of the future should be very different, intellectually and morally, from the agricultural labourer whom we know.

**A twenty-five years' policy.**—In sketching out a national policy in agriculture, it is necessary not to take short views. A quarter of a century has passed since the “good times of 1875,” during which the problem has become desperate. We must look forward to at least twenty-five years' work before we can achieve a revolution to prosperity. In proportion as the issues are great, so is the task of reform difficult. This necessity of working over a lengthened period imposes a double character on our policy. While, on the one hand, we must seek out the proper means of reorganizing agriculture, we must, on the other, take steps to ameliorate the existing order of things during the time which must elapse before it is replaced by a better. In that way what is good in existing modes will have an opportunity of surviving and developing according to its capability, and from its fate we shall derive guidance for our other plans. Since this improved present order will be the milieu in which our more revolutionary schemes will operate, the methods of amelioration must come first in our discussion.

### Ameliorative Measures.

#### I. REGULATION OF AGRICULTURAL WAGES.

The most immediate necessity is to begin by improving the condition of that class of the rural population, the agricultural labourers, who most need help. Broadly speaking, this means that we must deal with agricultural wages. So far the labourers have shown themselves unable to combine for any length of time to obtain better terms for themselves; and such improvement as has taken place in their remuneration, which is still rather below the subsistence level, has been due to the scarcity of rural labour, the very phenomenon which we desire to abolish. According to Mr. Wilson Fox, the lowest average weekly



earnings (including all extras for hay and corn harvest, etc.) were in Oxfordshire, 14s. 6d. in 1902, and the highest in Durham, 22s. 2d.; weekly cash wages ran from 10s. in some districts of Dorsetshire to a county average of 20s. in Durham. These wide local variations make it almost impossible to introduce one uniform minimum wage for agricultural labour over the whole country, and the multiplicity and irregularity of the constituents which make up the weekly earnings render the task of regulating wages locally exceedingly difficult. How far it might be possible to improve matters by regulating simply the cash weekly wage, leaving other payments to be matters of individual bargaining, is doubtful. If all extras could be abolished, and a weekly money wage substituted for them, the work of regulation would be simplified; the domestic economy of the labourers would be improved, and their dependence on the local shopkeeper—the current indebtedness which is wiped out when the extra money comes in—might be abolished. Yet it is a difficult thing to interfere with long-established custom, especially when dealing with such an ingrained conservative as the British working-man. The simplification of remuneration could only be safely taken in hand when asked for by the labourers of any particular district. So long as the existing system was maintained in its broad features, it would be necessary to have regard to the customary extra payments in fixing the weekly wage; and if it turned out later that the labourer gave away in bargaining for these what he had gained in his regular wage, they too would have to be brought within the scope of regulation. Payments in kind further complicate the problem. Beer is generally given in haytime and harvest. Coals, wood, potatoes, barley, oatmeal, milk are supplied free in other places. Elsewhere potato ground is found, ploughed, and manured. When cottages are part of the farm equipment, they are generally let to the labourer at a nominal rent of 1s. or 1s. 6d. a week instead of the 3s. or 4s. they would normally fetch. In the north of England they are usually supplied free with garden ground, making a notable addition to the income of the labourer.

*Wage courts.*—The State, then, being forced, on ac-

count of general national interests, to intervene for the purpose of securing to the labourer a substantial improvement in his standard of life, can only do so effectively by paying regard to local conditions. Courts to fix wages must be established in areas of appropriate size, probably counties, or county council areas. The constitution of these bodies will be discussed later. Their function should not be merely to ascertain what wage the free play of competition would determine and to sanction that, as so many arbitrators have done. Their duty, as expressed by statute, should be the fixing of wages for a term of years, say two or three, at such a level as would enable a labourer to bring up his family in comfort and, at the same time, to have the possibility of rising to a higher level of welfare. For this purpose all local customs and conditions should be taken into account, and, without any attempt at ensuring the same level of remuneration over the whole country, or aiming at a very large and sudden increase, which would disrupt the local agricultural economy, the principle should be kept steadily in view that no agriculture should be permitted which depended on the sweating of the labourer. The courts must also make special terms for the employment of old men. If meanwhile, as is possible, a national minimum wage, based on the minimum demands of bare healthy subsistence, is fixed, the work of the courts will be facilitated, and they can definitely devote themselves to raising the standard of life above this minimum level.

*Cottage rents.*—Cottage rent forms a serious complication of the wages problem. The present system of treating a low rent as involving a grant in aid of wages is thoroughly vicious. Broadly speaking, the rural cottages of England are only fit to be pulled down; and the impossibility of getting a rent which will repay the cost of construction prevents landlords from rebuilding. On the other hand, labourers prefer not to live in the farmers' cottages if they can help it; nor should we do anything to perpetuate their dependence on the farmer and landlord. Consequently, it is to the local authorities that we must look for that supply of comfortable cottages, with sufficient gardens, without which all other efforts at increasing, or

even retaining, the agricultural population will fail. Nor, in turn, can we expect local authorities to build when they cannot get an economic rent. In fixing wages, therefore, we must expect our courts to take such a rent into account ; and the farmers, where they still let cottages, must be left free to raise their rents to a proper level.

*The unmarried labourer.*—One other crux of wage fixing remains, the needs of different labourers according to the size of their families. On this it can only be said that we must work by averages. The unmarried labourer will certainly gain compared with the married, but, on the other hand, he will thus be enabled to save up for house furnishing and the higher expenses of married life. If one result is an increased birth-rate in the rural districts, that need not trouble us. Comfort, in the long run, does not make for an awkward population question.

## 2. FAIR RENTS.

Having established the most necessitous class of agriculturists on a sounder economic basis, and having arrived at an approximately more rational estimation of the labour cost of farming, we must next deal with the farmers themselves. Obviously their rents will require readjustment in consequence of the increase in wages. Even under present conditions rents are very generally too high, and the good farmer improves his land only for the profit of the landlord. "At present," says Mr. Pringle, one of the Sub-commissioners under the Royal Commission on Agriculture, "there is on many estates a distinct penalty attached to good farming and a clear incentive to bad farming." In addition, the system of annual tenure does not make for good cultivation. The farmer wants, besides fair rents, reasonable fixity of tenure, freedom from restrictive covenants as to tillage, and proper compensation for improvements. The landlord, on the other hand, wants as much rent as he can get and security that his land should be properly farmed.

Once again private enterprize has failed to secure the ends desired ; once again the State must interfere. We want to set up County Land Courts which shall fix fair

rents, say, for a tenancy of seven years, and to which disputes as to proper cultivation and compensation for improvements may be referred. In this way the farmer would obtain what he most needs, while at the same time the landlord would have a means of getting rid of an inefficient tenant. But there are not only inefficient tenants, but inefficient landlords as well, nor can there be any unfairness in the court requiring a landlord to make any necessary expenditure on buildings, drainage, etc., on terms to be fixed by the court. Irish experience will warn us against one thing, setting up any form of dual ownership. There must be one owner only of the land; the farmer must possess only a right of user during his tenancy. If he dies or wishes to resign his farm before his term runs out, then there will be only a matter of account between him and his landlord, to be settled, if necessary, by the court. It may so happen that in some districts economic rent will entirely disappear. In such cases once more private interests must yield to the requirements of the community, and landlords may comfort themselves with the knowledge that it is not proposed to reopen the accounts of the past, or to demand restitution of what they may have, to the national injury, annexed wrongfully of the product of the land. To such owners the right might be conceded of requiring the State to purchase their land at a price fixed by the court.

*Mr. Gilbert Murray's plan.*—Mr. Gilbert Murray, the Derbyshire land agent, outlined before the Royal Commission on Agriculture a rent-fixing scheme which is worth reproduction: "It must be conceded that any equitable method of fixing the rental value of land must be based on its capabilities of production, this being the first and most important factor in the calculation, and on which the subsequent success or failure of the scheme entirely depends. Take the land in a normal state, without regard to extra manorial condition, which, according to the Act of 1883, belongs to the tenant, or to dilapidations for which the landlord is entitled to compensation. The valuer carefully inspects each separate enclosure belonging to each holding, making a note of the average quantities of pro-



duce it is best adapted to produce ; having done this, calculating the quantities and attaching to each the market prices of the day are purely clerical ; having scheduled the quantities under the different heads, a permanent standard is arrived at, forming a basis on which all future fluctuations of prices are calculated ; by this means the average gross value per acre of the produce is ascertained. The next factor is the cost of production, which varies in almost every occupation. The items which go to make up the gross cost of production are manual labour, horse labour, seeds and plants, tradesmen's bills, interest on capital, tenant's remuneration, insurance of stocks and crops, and depreciation on implements and machinery ; collectively these are the outgoings which, deducted from the gross value of the produce per acre, the balance is the amount available for rent, rates, and tithe ; the latter in whatever way they are put are landlord's payments. This may fairly be taken as a fixed amount, the only quantity liable to fluctuation is manual labour. . . . Practical experience confirms that this is the only correct and fair method of ascertaining the rental value of land ; if applied to a sliding scale it will mete out equal justice to owner and occupier. The tenant has a free hand for the exercise of his skill and judgment, and the expenditure of his capital in increasing the productive power of the soil to its utmost limit without the fear of an increase of rent, which is ruled by the average prices of the year calculated on the normal produce of the land which still remains a fixed quantity. Here we have an incentive to an improved system of cultivation by which the land would be stimulated and the produce greatly increased. So far the rent has been fixed on the basis of its present capabilities of production. In many cases drainage and buildings are necessary in order to fully develop the natural capabilities of the soil. In every case it is essential that all estate improvements should be done by the landlord. . . . The interest on the outlay on drainage and buildings should be paid by the tenant." (Royal Commission on Agriculture, App. A, xviii., Vol. I.)

Well-known landlords like the Duke of Richmond, Lord Aberdeen, and Sir M. Hicks-Beach are known to be in



favour of the fixing of rents by valuation and not by competition. Several bills for the institution of land courts have been introduced into Parliament by Messrs. Channing, Lambert, Luttrell, Price, and others. The evidence before the Royal Commission also shows that while farmers are still mainly in favour of the existing system their opinions are changing.

**Agricultural courts.**—So far we have talked only vaguely of Wage Courts and Rent Courts. From many points of view it would be advantageous to have only one authority to deal both with wages and with rents. In future rents will be largely conditioned by wages, on the principle that the first charge on agriculture must be the comfortable maintenance of those directly engaged on the land, whether farmers or labourers. There is scarcely the material in rural districts for constructing wage boards on the New Zealand principle, consisting of equal numbers of elected representatives of employers and employed with a neutral chairman. Both in fixing wages and rents the primary characteristics of the court should be independence, ability, and acquaintance with agricultural affairs. These would probably best be secured by nomination of the members by the Board of Agriculture, with perhaps the additional safeguard that the names should be laid before Parliament in Orders in Council. The Agricultural Court—to choose a name which would cover all its functions—should consist of few members, preferably three, and its area should be not less than that of a county council. Perhaps it might be found possible to group counties together, but the need for paying regard to all local conditions would probably depress the balance in favour of the smaller area. In wage matters the court should first proceed by way of a public inquiry, and, to facilitate the transaction of this part of its business, assessors, representing landlords, farmers, and labourers, might be nominated either by the county or parish councils.

**Defects not remedied.**—The measures so far suggested would probably improve the condition of farmers and labourers, but they are not in themselves sufficient to place agriculture in the position in which we desire to see it. No provision is made that agricultural labourers should be

anything but labourers for hire. The immediate aim of the legislation proposed is to raise them to the same level of comfort as industrial workers. Farming capital is, on the average, much below what was formerly considered necessary. It is often nearer £5 an acre than the standard £10. Fair rents and fair wages will considerably diminish the income of the land-owning class; and, impoverished as many sections already are, we cannot look to the landlords for the expenditure of the money necessary to put the whole of our cultivable area in a good state. The passing of land into wealthier hands must be a slow process, and the new men who seek to grow "not produce, but part-ridges," as one of Mr. Rider Haggard's informants complains, would be no improvement on the old. The landlord system is condemned economically by its failure, a failure which it cannot attribute to free trade, since in Denmark, which, equally with ourselves, has free trade in agricultural products, and has not advantage of soil or climate, agriculture is prosperous. Such useful functions as landlords sporadically perform as industrial organizers could be performed otherwise more cheaply and with more uniformity and intelligence. And, finally, from the standpoint of national interests, we cannot regard the average country gentleman, with his ideals of sport and idleness, mitigated by casual service to the State in honorific capacities, his claim that he and his fellows constitute the only qualified governing class, and his not infrequent petty tyrannies, as a social institution which we desire to perpetuate.

**The success of the foreigner.**—The problem is not solved by our plumping in favour of land nationalization, whether wholesale or progressive. We must consider what we desire to be the form of agricultural organization under State ownership. The weakest point in the present system is the marketing of farm products, and before we can tackle reconstruction we must find the cause of this weakness. Our butter comes from Denmark, Russia, France, Australia, New Zealand; cheese from Canada, United States, Holland, New Zealand; eggs from Russia, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, France; vegetables from France and Germany. All these are products which can be supplied at

home in good quality, and the market for them is steadily growing. Why, then, should the British grower be uniformly beaten for the mass of the trade by his foreign competitors?

**Railways and agriculture.**—The answer is generally that the cause is the policy of British railway companies in conceding preferential rates to foreign importers. The companies reply that foreign consignments arrive in large quantities, easily made up into carloads, with the minimum of expense in collection and delivery, while British consignments are made up of numerous small parcels, necessitating great expense in handling, in clerical labour, and in delivery, and in every way the minimum of profit. Nevertheless there is good reason for believing that the charge is justified in that the rates are actually too high, and their reduction must form a part of any considered progressive policy. But the farmers also are seriously to blame, for the railway companies in recent years, at all events, probably smarting under public opinion and stimulated by the complaints of the Board of Agriculture, have repeatedly offered them exceptional terms if they will unite to send large consignments, but to no purpose.

**Co-operation the secret of success.**—Cheap railway transport and better conditions of sale can be obtained if the farmers will combine. What has hitherto been lacking is the desire for combination, though in a few localities that defect is being slowly overcome. What characterizes the agriculture of the Continent is the prevalence of combination. Alike in Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Hungary, Finland, Poland, Servia, we find a network of co-operative societies all over the country—societies for the co-operative purchase of seeds, manures, implements and machinery, co-operative creameries for the production of butter and cheese, egg-collecting societies, societies for the sale of fruit or grain, export societies, mutual insurance societies, and so on. This voluntary co-operative movement is generally fostered by the State, and has received much aid from landlords and religious bodies. It is true that their object has often been to create a new anti-socialist force, but our aim must

be to free the movement from such selfish influences by putting it under communal guardianship.

The co-operation of the State with agriculturists is well exemplified by our colonies, where, for instance, the Governments of Australia and New Zealand inspect and classify produce, provide cold storage depots, and publish lists of the "creameries" and cheese "factories"—many of them owned by the farmers co-operatively—within their boundaries. So well known and so reliable is the Government hall-mark that, if his goods are certified to be of the finest grade, the shipper can sell them "to arrive" c. i. f., while certain creameries and factories of special repute can dispose of their produce months in advance. The large wholesale dealers will not bother about the scrappy supplies, of varying quantities and qualities, of English goods while they can get uniform parcels in large quantities of colonial and continental produce. Again, the combined dairy interests of Victoria were able to get the rate of freight to England reduced for three years from  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to  $\frac{3}{8}$ d. per pound of butter. First and last, co-operation is the secret of success.

**Large farms and co-operation.**—The one common link between all these different countries is that they are mainly peasant countries in which small-scale farming is the dominant form. Now it would appear that large-scale farming tends to individualism, whereas small holdings make evident the advantages of mutual assistance. To the large farmer the neighbouring large farmers appear as his immediate competitors, obscuring the fact that there is room for all so long as such large imports come in from abroad. Hence arise mutual jealousies, unwillingness to let his neighbours know his customers, the fear of helping his rivals to make a profit—all the petty causes which unite to prevent such simple forms of combination as a joint stock creamery or associated consignments of farm produce by railway. "My experience," says Mr. Rider Haggard, "is that large farmers absolutely refuse to combine. Small holdings seem to be essential to successful co-operation."

That the large farm system is the main cause of the opposition to combination appears more convincingly when



we consider the spread of co-operation among the peasant proprietors of Ireland, where the revival of agriculture is solely due to combined action among the peasants. Even in England, in those districts where small holdings prevail, we find co-operation flourishing. Thus the Evesham fruit growers combine to sell direct without a middleman. The Rew Farm (Dorset) peasant proprietors co-operate in ploughing and threshing. The Vale of Tivy (Cardigan) Society has 600 members, makes joint purchases of supplies, and undertakes the bulk sale of its members' Christmas poultry and pigs. The Emlyn Society also sells poultry. The Welsh societies are grouped in a federation, which in 1903 made purchases on behalf of its members to the amount of £25,000.

**Small farms and landlordism.**—Side by side with this phenomenon of the development of combination among small holders is the other that small farms yield a better rent than large ones and are in more demand, as may be seen from almost every page of Mr. Rider Haggard's great inquiry. It may be asked why then cannot we leave things to their natural development? The more profitable forms of agriculture must necessarily drive out the less profitable. The answer is that many landlords cannot afford the capital outlay required to equip with buildings, fences, etc., the small farms into which the existing large farms might be divided. Many others violently object to small holdings on account of the additional trouble they give, the resulting interference with sport, and other anti-social reasons. An even more serious objection is the unduly high rents charged for small holdings. Thus Mr. Rider Haggard, after quoting instances near Bewdley of a 40-acre farm paying 50s. an acre, while an adjoining farm of 250 acres of similar land was rented at 20s. an acre, and of a rent of £40 a year for 24 acres of poor land, while a neighbouring farm of between 300 and 400 acres paid only 12s. or 13s. an acre, says: "Although it must be remembered that little holdings are necessarily more expensive than large ones, since the landlord must be remunerated for the cost and upkeep of the extra set of buildings, I admit that the difference in the price asked seems to me excessive.



. . . As a remedy, I suggest that such tenancies should, as far as possible, be under the management of county councils or other public bodies, which could buy the land in large blocks and sell or let it out in small ones without being exposed to the temptation of seeking to take advantage of the demand in order to secure an extravagant profit."

The small holding also gives the labourer his first opportunity of rising. With a little capital he can raise himself out of the position of a drudge and undertake work requiring intelligence and foresight. As to the efficiency of small holdings, even when very small, in stemming the rural exodus, Mr. Winfrey gives some interesting evidence. Taking nineteen parishes round Spalding, the population in 1881 was 38,789; in 1891, 36,507; and in 1901, 36,392. In the last decade the population in this area has been almost stationary, whereas elsewhere it has declined rapidly, and no other reason can be assigned except the allotments and small holdings movement since 1887, in consequence of which some 2,300 acres are now cultivated in allotments and 830 acres in small holdings.

**Peasant proprietorship.**—Since then small farms are themselves profitable and tend to the growth of co-operation, since, further, they increase the rural population by offering an inducement to the labourers to stay on the land, we are justified in taking this system as the most advantageous basis for the reconstruction of agriculture. Complete analogy with foreign countries and with Ireland would, however, lead us to the introduction of a peasant proprietary. Several reasons militate against this. All the advantages of peasant proprietorship can be secured by according to farmers a sufficient security of tenure, while by not having to purchase his farm the tenant would have his capital free for stocking his holding. There is also no means of getting rid of an incompetent peasant proprietor except through the Bankruptcy Court. Men of small resources, again, fall easy victims to changes in the world market for agricultural produce; and the peasantry of Germany, as well as of many English districts, are burdened with mortgages. The creation of a peasant proprietary would introduce us to troublesome questions of

inheritance, sub-letting, and splitting up of properties. Furthermore, there are certain troublesome social phenomena, results of peasant proprietorship, such as the "two children" family, from which we may well ask to be spared. The hard grinding toil on small properties has also bad psychical effects. On the small copyholds in Downham (Cambridgeshire) Mr. Rider Haggard quotes Canon Thornton that the conditions of life are "brutalizing in their hardness," and that the people "grow stolid, hard, and capricious." The Small Holdings Act of 1890 was specially designed to aid the creation of peasant proprietors, but, from that point of view, has been a complete failure. Being forced by urgent necessity to intervene with all the power of the State to rescue the land from the mismanagement of one set of private owners, it would be a short-sighted policy on our part to hand it over to another class of private owners, and that one which has always been stubbornly and timorously conservative.

**Socialists and bonanza farms.**—There is one socialist agricultural ideal which has so far been left untouched. Extending manufacturing development to agriculture, and arguing on analogy with the bonanza farms of America, some have contemplated a future in which England would be cut up into large farms with a specialized cultivation, worked by machinery and managed by State officials. Much the same ideas are put forward by some landlords. This solution leaves out of account one of our objects, the settling of more people on the land. It is a plan to do without agricultural labourers, not to increase them. On economic grounds we have reason to doubt whether giant farms are suited to our conditions. In America they are now being broken up, while we have quite enough evidence, from the published results of small holdings, that volume of output and quality of product do not necessarily depend upon the magnitude of the area cultivated as a unit. In an old country what is needed is intensive cultivation, the most careful attention to the peculiarities of each separate field. This is best attained by farms of moderate size cultivated by persons having a direct personal interest in getting continuously the largest and most marketable product out of the soil.

**Graduated farms.**—While, however, as has been said, small farms must form the basis of our new organization, it does not follow that all the farms need be small. Even at present a competent farmer with plenty of capital and a reasonable rent, who employs scientific methods and adapts his knowledge to the changing needs of the market, can and does make farming pay, and, with the increase of the agricultural population, the labour question would be to some extent solved. It is also most desirable to avoid that monotony of rural society which would result from holdings of uniform size, and there is no reason to suppose that the maximum of capacity would be satisfied by a farm only large enough to occupy a man and his family and, perhaps, one or two assistants. The term “small farm” is itself incapable of sharp definition; according to the crop and method of culture it may be anything from 20 to 150 acres. From all points of view, not least from the social, the sanest ideal is that of a graduated style of land division, resting firmly on a broad basis of small farms and rising above into larger holdings of different sizes such as will give employment to all grades of agricultural talent.

**Land nationalization.**—Our ultimate aim is to bring the whole of the land into national ownership, but before we buy we want to know what would be a fair price after allowing for fair wages to the labourer and fair profits to the farmer, and we do not want to have all the land of the country on our hands before we are quite sure what we are going to do with it and have acquired the skill and knowledge necessary for its management. In this matter we must proceed gradually. Nor do we contemplate administration from Whitehall. Agriculture is precisely the thing which demands local management and control. The function of the central government is to assist the local authorities with its credit, to superintend their financial arrangements, and to conduct the scientific study of agriculture.

**Constructive measures. Statutory agricultural committees : constitution.**—At present we have the germ of local administration in the Small Holdings Committee, which every county council is bound by statute to form. But the urban as well as the rural areas are concerned with

agriculture; their supplies of eggs, poultry, vegetables, fruit, butter, cheese, and, above all, of milk may well come from their own neighbourhood, and the utilization of the land immediately bordering on their margins is of prime importance to them. Consequently, we propose the constitution in each county council area of a statutory Agricultural Committee composed of members of the county council and of all borough councils within its geographical area. To this joint committee will be entrusted the management of all the lands which may be acquired from private owners. A smaller area than a county would hardly give us the requisite choice among men of ability, but to the parish councils might be delegated certain minor functions at the will of the committee. It must also be made possible, by the grant of suitable subsistence and travelling allowances, for any qualified man to take part in this work, and not merely the man with a horse and trap who at present has almost a monopoly of county government. When the new system has got thoroughly to work, and its possibilities become clearer, it may become advisable to link up these committees into larger areas, as has been proposed in other branches of local administration. But at first it will be better to begin at as many points as possible, and to conciliate and, as it were, circumvent rural conservatism by sticking to known areas. The expenses of the Committee would be a charge on the rents received, though perhaps at first there might be a small charge on the rates for starting the machinery.

**Powers and terms of compulsory purchase.**—The Committee would have power to acquire land compulsorily. If a fair rent had already been fixed, then the purchase would proceed on the lines of securing to the vendor his net income, that is, the rent, less the expenditure of about one-fourth on repairs and improvements, which is necessary to keep the land in a lettable condition. If such a rent has not been fixed, then its ascertainment would form a preliminary to purchase. It is not proposed to buy out at full price a landlord whose rent comes from the sweating of the farmer and the labourer. Nor would cash necessarily pass. All that we are bound to do is to guarantee to the



vendor the income he could derive from the land under fair conditions. This would mean the creation of a new national stock, the interest on which would be a first charge on the net produce of the land. Regulations would also have to be adopted to secure to an owner who wished to retain his residence sufficient land to preserve the amenities of his house ; and he should also be entitled to require that the Committee should purchase a whole estate, and not " pick the eyes " out of his property. The central government would come in as a guarantor of the stock, and, before its sanction was given to the issue, it would have to satisfy itself that the purchase was made on proper terms. It also goes without saying that we expect that the incomes of the expropriated landlords would be liable to that heavy and differential taxation to which we hope that all idle drawers of rent and interest will be subjected in the near future. A precedent for the national resumption of land can be found in the law of New Zealand, under which up to March, 1904, 131 estates, aggregating 615,255 acres, have been recovered at a cost of over £2,939,155. There are now 2,745 tenants on the subdivided area, and the profit to the State, after paying interest on the purchase loan and cost of administration, exceeds £50,000 a year. In addition an estate of some 80,000 acres has been taken over under the land tax assessment law, and is returning a good profit. If it were thought desirable to experiment on a somewhat large scale before embarking on a policy of compulsory purchase, we might try the small farm principle on the Crown lands (69,500 acres) and the estates of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (279,000 acres). There it could be tested on a variety of soils and under very diverse conditions. There are also about 650,000 acres of glebe lands which might at once be placed under local administration.

**Terms of leasing.**—The Committee would next have to divide the land into farms according to the demand, and these might vary in extent from small accommodation holdings for village tradesmen and others who wished to carry on some land culture in addition to their ordinary occupations up to any size for which a reliable tenant could be obtained ; but the necessity of increasing the number

of settlers on the land would always be kept prominently in view. It would not be the primary aim of the Committee to settle on the land the "unemployed" or men who had been failures in every rank of life. Its object would be to pick men who understood agriculture, and preferably those with some capital. Some heavy expenditure would be required to equip the holdings with the necessary buildings, fences, and roads. Tenancies would be granted for seven years, or for twenty-one years, revisable at periods of seven years, so that the tenant might not be able to appropriate the unearned increment of the land; but it should also be clearly understood that a satisfactory tenant would not be arbitrarily disturbed in his holding. At the same time, no mercy would be extended to a bad cultivator; and when a tenant left his holding, either by the efflux of time or for any other reason, he would have no tenant right to dispose of, but would only be entitled to compensation for unexhausted improvements, and to a fair settlement of accounts as between himself and the Committee. Rents would be fixed and disputes settled by the independent Agricultural Court, which would also continue the regulation of agricultural wages. Exploitation of the economically weak must not be permitted even to a communal authority. It would be within the power of the Committee to rent farms to co-operative associations of labourers, if satisfied as to their industrial and financial capacity. Arrangements might also be made whereby a town could run its own dairy farm or farms, since this is probably the only way in which a municipality can be sure of an uncontaminated supply of milk. Further, the Committee should be encouraged, or perhaps directed, to establish labour colonies of different classes on which persons unemployed through stress of trade might obtain useful employment, and the surplus population of the towns might be restored to physical efficiency and put in the way of earning their living.

**Stocking the farms.**—It is a more novel proposal, but one probably necessary, to suggest that the Committee might aid its tenants in stocking their farms. We are not without precedents. The Irish Board of Agriculture grants

loans at three per cent. to creameries for the purchase of Pasteurizing plant on the collective bond of the members. The Congested Districts Board of Ireland provides fishermen with boats on periodical payments, and between the 5th August, 1891, and the 31st March, 1904, spent £113,894 in buying horses, asses, cattle, sheep, swine, poultry, implements, etc., for resale to its tenants. New Zealand in 1894, Victoria in 1890 and 1896, New South Wales in 1899 and 1902, passed Acts allowing advances to settlers on mortgage; while West Australia in 1894 and 1896, South Australia in 1895, and Queensland in 1901, established land banks with State loans to promote the occupation, cultivation, and improvement of agricultural lands. We may also mention the advances made to landlords under the Drainage and Improvement Acts, and the recommendation of the Royal Commission that public money should be advanced to owners "for the purpose of agricultural improvements" at a fair rate of interest. £4,000,000 were advanced by the Exchequer under the early Drainage Acts. We therefore contemplate that an Agricultural Committee should encourage the union of its tenants into agricultural associations, to which it should make advances on the collective guarantee of the members for the purpose of stocking farms. The Committee would borrow the money from which to make loans on a national guarantee, the interest being a first charge on the capital of the farms. In this way the difficulty of allotting the loan among the component bodies of the Committee would be small. The risk, in any case, would not be great. Responsibility for making the advances to individuals would lie with the association, which would be bound in self-defence to see to it that the borrower was of good character. In this way we would follow the excellent example of the Continental associations, and it is worth noting that the moral character of the villagers generally improves where there is an association, so that they may qualify for a loan. It is better that the Committee should make advances to such an association rather than stock the farms itself, not only on account of the additional security, but on account of the impulse given to co-operation. The farmers could

also utilize these associations for the joint purchase of seeds, manures, etc., and also for sale of farm produce. One specialty of farm capital is that much of it is only used for a brief part of the year and lies idle during the rest, such as reapers, etc., which are also too costly for the small man. Aided by loans from the Committee, an association might purchase such machines and hold them in common property, letting them out in rotation among the members. The improvement of our cattle and sheep herds might also be furthered by the common ownership of pedigree bulls and rams in the same way.

**Marketing the produce.**—The Agricultural Committees might still further assist the farmers by helping to organize the sale of their produce. To some extent this would be done by the extension of light railways and motor services in order to improve the means of communication and transport. The Post Office might also institute an agricultural parcels post. But even after everything had been done in this way, and even after railway rates had been reduced as a result of nationalization, much would remain to be done before railway transport was organized in the cheapest possible fashion. Once again the Congested Districts Board affords us a precedent, for it for some years bought fish from the fishermen on the West Coast of Ireland, cured them, and arranged for their sale in Manchester ; when it had proved to the private fish-dealers that a lucrative trade was possible it retired from the business.

A beginning might be made by getting municipal supplies from the communal tenants—the grain, dairy, and vegetable products for the workhouses and industrial schools, and fodder for the municipal horses, while the horses themselves might be bred on the communally owned farms. If the milk supply is municipalized, that would afford an opportunity for further integration. The Government might buy their remounts direct from the farmers, sending good stallions into the different districts, or might even start large horse farms. The War Office and Admiralty might also arrange for supplies of butter, cheese, bacon, and vegetables from the county tenants. Some things might also be done for the supply of the general market.



Working through the agricultural associations, the Agricultural Committees might make advances for the starting of creameries, and might supervise the grading and standardizing of butter and cheese. The certificate of the Irish Board of Agriculture is valued by the Irish tenants, and has had good results in improving the quality of the products. Packing and forwarding agencies might be started in various centres, to collect agricultural produce, grade it, and forward it to the markets in quantities large enough to secure the best terms from the railway companies. From each agency collectors might tour the neighbouring districts in regular circuits, collecting eggs, etc., from the farmers and cottagers. The L. and N.W. Railway Company collects ducks in the Aylesbury district in its own carts and sends them to London. The low value of much British farm produce is due to imperfect grading and careless packing, defects which would be remedied at the agency. The expenses incurred would, of course, form a first charge on the prices obtained. Co-operative jam factories might also be set up in fruit-growing counties. The natural sale area of any rural district is the towns in its immediate vicinity, and the committees would turn their attention to obtaining proper market facilities in these by establishing sale agencies. Negotiations might also be opened up with co-operative stores for the supply of agricultural produce to be resold to their members. The general principle to be kept in mind is that the market is large enough to allow all British growers to dispose of all their produce provided it is of the same quality and cheapness as foreign produce, and that consequently it is their business to co-operate in order to secure the best terms of sale instead of entering into foolish competition with each other.

We need not be disappointed, however, if not much produce comes into the market from the smaller classes of holdings, especially those where the occupiers follow some other avocation as well. Mr. Winfrey, writing of the small holdings in Spalding, says: "The tenant is well aware that his best policy is not to sell at all, but consume as much as possible of his produce in the form of potatoes, vegetables, home-baked bread, home-fed bacon, and home-grown broad

beans, not to name a couple of domestic fowls occasionally on Sunday for dinner. In this way he avoids selling his produce in a bulk at a low figure, and having to buy bread and meat. His table can generally be well stocked with plain food from the land, leaving his wages free for other purposes. Straw, too, is a great convenience. It makes possible the Christmas fat pig." Such small holders would particularly profit from the collecting agencies suggested above. Poultry rearing is best undertaken as an adjunct to other farming; to devote an acre or two of a small farm to bush or tree fruit, or to early vegetables, is generally a safe source of good profit. But the cost of getting the goods to market often destroys all the grower's gain. The institution of a daily motor goods service connecting a small farm district with the nearest town or a suitable railway station consequently commends itself to us as not only convenient to the grower, but also advantageous to the public.

So far we have discussed what the State can do to put land, capital, and a market within reach of the agriculturist. One thing still remains—skill—and the State can aid in its provision.

**Educating the agriculturist.**—Beginning at the bottom, education in country districts must be aimed more directly than it is to-day at fitting the children for a rural life. We will make no truce with the proposal to supply farmers with cheap child labour in the guise of a seasonal half-time system on the plea that if boys are not applied early to farm labour, they will abandon the land. When a career on the land is offered to the agricultural labourer's son, it will be found that a good education, if not entirely bookish, will fit, and not unfit, him for his work. This is even more true of middle-class education, so lamentably faulty in country districts. Continuation school work in agricultural subjects might also be tried for the benefit of lads who have left school. Existing agricultural colleges are doing good work, but there should be more of them; and their instruction should be brought within the reach of the small holder, who might be able to take a special course, but could not afford much in fees. In other ways technical instruction might be brought to the doors, as it were, of

the farmers. Already some county councils send travelling dairies round the countryside to instruct dairy workers ; but this tends to perpetuate the private dairy, whereas the future lies with the co-operative dairy of the Danish stamp. Agricultural organizers and instructors might be employed who, by personal visits or by holding quite small meetings, might give the farmers much useful instruction and information, and help to keep them up to date both as regards markets and the application of science to agriculture. The formation of farmers' clubs, shows, agricultural societies, and the vivification of those now existing, would help to this end. In agricultural research we are lamentably behind every other country, our colonies included. We have relied on the munificence of a few individuals, and lately on the enterprize of the Universities. This is a matter of the most urgent importance. To take but one example, the future of British wheat farming will turn largely on the possibility of evolving by cross fertilization a new wheat combining the good baking qualities of Canadian wheat and the large cropping qualities of British wheat. Our State contribution to this object has been £100. Such misguided parsimony must cease. The main duty of the Board of Agriculture of the future must be the purveying of information, and it must be given funds to enable it to become on a much larger scale than at present the intelligence department of rural Britain. Among other institutions bearing upon this work, it must organize a research department in which the best agricultural talent that can be obtained will be constantly at work on the improvement of agricultural methods and processes and the solution of urgent agricultural problems.

**The agriculturist of the future.**—Many writers dilate upon the dullness of rural life, and to the agricultural labourer it must be dull enough. Underpaid, underfed, badly housed, with little pleasure in the present and scant hope for the future, and with a tradition of oppression from all the classes above him—the liberty and the squalid attractions of the great town easily overpower the few ties that bind him to the country. This is the kind of life we desire to change. Give him a decent wage, decent food, a

decent house, security from the interference of squire, farmer, and parson in his private affairs, and, above all, a real chance of bettering himself, and we shall see a new style of agricultural worker. There is something in the "magic of property," above all, of property in oneself.

Much depends upon the way in which the housing problem is solved, not merely the house accommodation, but the grouping of the houses. The large farm, to which some look for the salvation of agriculture, with its isolated farmhouse (or perhaps an absentee farmer in a town some miles away), staffed by a few shepherds or engineers, does not sound as if likely to add much to the gaiety of rural life. When the local authority builds cottages for labourers it must build them neither in isolated ones or twos about a farm, nor yet in close conglomerations in some marshy hollow, but in loose clusters, surrounded with gardens, interspersed with the bigger houses of the larger farmers. The dwelling houses of the small farmers might be in the same or similar groups, while the farm buildings were on the holdings some distance away, but yet within easy reach. In this way a chain of associated life would run through the countryside. With the revival of agriculture would come also the revival of the small towns which at present decay with the decay of rural industry. In this way, in a real and practical sense, the towns would be "spread over the country," and a stimulus given to the decentralization of manufacture. Round their suburbs would run a ring of farms, and within their precincts many of the workers on the nearer large holdings might reside. The outer village-clusters would be closely connected with them by motor services and light railways. In all these ways the best elements of town and country life would be inter-fused. The rural districts would be more closely settled, and while the general health of the nation would be improved, dullness and apathy would be eliminated from country life.

**Summary.**—To sum up: the breakdown of private enterprise in agriculture has left us with landlords and farmers impoverished, with agricultural labourers earning less than, or just over, subsistence wages. Much capital has been lost, the agricultural population has declined to



a dangerous degree. There is no organization for the supply of our growing town markets, everywhere is chaos, while the foreign producer every day gains ground by superior organization. It is necessary for the State to interfere, partly to secure the better utilization of our national resources, partly to increase our agricultural population. We must look forward to five-and-twenty years of resolute effort; prosperity cannot be restored in a day. The class most needing protection, the labourers, must be dealt with first in order to raise them to a decent level of comfort. A living wage must be secured to them and, as a consequence, the farmers' rents must be fixed at a fair level. An Agricultural Court must be set up in each county to regulate wages and fix rents. Continental success in agriculture depends on co-operation, and that in turn is associated with the peasant proprietor system. That system, for sundry reasons, cannot be adopted here, but its advantages can be obtained through security of tenure. The small farm system should, therefore, form the basis of our reconstruction, free play being left for a graded system of farms where possible. In each county an Agricultural Committee should have compulsory power to acquire land and let it out to tenants, chiefly small holders. It should have power to advance capital to individuals on the collective guarantee of its tenants, and it should be its duty to organize the collection of farm produce and its disposal in the market.

All the evidence we possess points to the probability that in this way we should increase our agricultural population, and thereby ameliorate many town problems. Yet it is risky and certainly revolutionary, but that is always the case when order has to be brought out of chaos. The process, however, will be gradual, not catastrophic, and as it goes on the rural dwellers will learn that county government is not something outside them, but that it is themselves, concerned with their interests, flourishing with their prosperity, decaying in their adversity. When this lesson has been learned, the development will proceed swiftly and harmoniously to the desired end.

[Some of the proposals made in this tract have been adopted in the Allotments and Small Holdings Act, 1907.]

# PUBLICATIONS OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY.

## FABIAN BOOKS.

**Fabian Essays in Socialism.** Edited by Bernard Shaw.  
40,000 sold. Paper 1s., cloth 2s., post-free.

**This Misery of Boots.** By H. G. Wells. Fcap. 8vo. Paper  
3d., post-free 4d., or 2s. 3d. per dozen, post-free 2s. 7d.

**Fabianism and the Empire.** Edited by Bernard Shaw.  
Post-free 1s. 1½d.

**Fabian Tracts.** Bound. Complete set of those in print. 1 vol.  
Buckram 4s. 6d., post-free 5s.

## FABIAN TRACTS.

1d. each (postage ½d.), or 9d. per dozen (postage 3d.), unless stated  
otherwise.

### I. *On Socialism in its Various Aspects.*

- No.  
51. **Socialism True and False.** By Sidney Webb, L.C.C.  
5. **Facts for Socialists.** 10th Edition. Revised 1906.  
7. **Capital and Land.** 6th Edition. Revised 1904.  
45. **The Impossibilities of Anarchism.** By Bernard  
Shaw. 2d.  
69. **The Difficulties of Individualism.** By Sidney Webb.  
113. **Communism.** By William Morris.  
107. **Socialism for Millionaires.** By Bernard Shaw.  
15. **English Progress towards Social Democracy.**  
By Sidney Webb.  
72. **The Moral Aspects of Socialism.** By Sidney Ball, M.A.  
133. **Socialism and Christianity.** By Rev. Percy Dearmer.  
42. **Christian Socialism.** By Rev. Stewart D. Headlam.  
78. **Socialism and the Teaching of Christ.** By Rev.  
John Clifford.  
87. **A Welsh Translation of No. 78.**

### II. *On the Application of Socialism to Particular Problems.*

#### *Municipal and State Control of Industry.*

- No.  
128. **The Case for a Legal Minimum Wage.**  
125. **Municipalization by Provinces.**  
119. **Public Control of Electric Power and Transit.**  
123. **The Revival of Agriculture. A National Policy.**  
115. **State Aid to Agriculture.** By T. S. Dymond.  
121. **Public Service versus Private Expenditure.** By  
Sir Oliver Lodge.  
84. **The Economics of Direct Employment.**  
122. **Municipal Milk and Public Health.** By Lawson  
Dodd.  
86. **Municipal Drink Traffic.** 4th Edition, 1905.  
85. **Liquor Licensing at Home and Abroad.** [P.T.O.]

*Publications of the Fabian Society—continued.*

- No. *Housing.*  
76. **Houses for the People.** A description of the powers of local authorities for housing.  
103. **Overcrowding in London and its Remedy.** By W. C. Steadman, M.P.  
109. **Cottage Plans and Common Sense.** By Raymond Unwin.

- No. *Factory Acts and Conditions of Labour.*  
112. **Life in the Laundry.** A summary of conditions and reforms.  
130. **Home-work and Sweating.** By Miss B. L. Hutchins.  
48. **Eight Hours by Law.** A practical solution.  
23. **The Case for an Eight Hours Bill.**  
47. **The Unemployed.** By John Burns, M.P.  
83. **State Arbitration and the Living Wage.** 2nd ed.  
75. **Labor in the Longest Reign.** By Sidney Webb.

- No. *Other Problems.*  
136. **The Village and the Landlord.** By Edward Carpenter.  
135. **Paupers and Old Age Pensions.** By Sidney Webb.  
131. **The Decline in the Birth Rate.** By Sidney Webb.  
126. **The Abolition of Poor Law Guardians.**  
120. **"After Bread, Education."**  
118. **Secret of Rural Depopulation.** By D. C. Pedder.  
111. **Reform of Reformatories and Industrial Schools.**  
98. **State Railways for Ireland.**  
124. **State Control of Trusts.** By H. W. Macrosty, B.A.  
14. **The New Reform Bill.** A draft scheme.  
82. **The Workman's Compensation Act, 1906.**

*III. On General Politics and the Policy of Fabian Society.*

- No.  
127. **Socialism and Labour Policy.**  
116. **Fabianism and the Fiscal Question.** An alternative policy.  
108. **Twentieth Century Policy.** By Sidney Webb.  
70. **Report on Fabian Policy (to Internal Socialist Workers).**  
41. **The Early History of the Fabian Society.** By Bernard Shaw.  
40. **The Fabian Election Manifesto, 1892.**

*IV. On Books.*

- No.  
182. **A Guide to Books for Socialists.**  
29. **What to Read.** A classified list. 4th edition. 6d. net.  
129. **More Books to Read.** 1901-6.

A complete list of Tracts and Leaflets sent on application to the Secretary,  
THE FABIAN SOCIETY, 3 CLEMENT'S INN, LONDON, W.C.





## Date Due

[illegible]

HX 11 .F23 no 2

010101 000

Socialism and agriculture,



0 1163 0232290 8

TRENT UNIVERSITY

HX11 .F23 no. 2

AUTHOR

Socialism and agriculture

TITLE

DATE DUE

BORROWER'S NAME

175432

175432

